

The SPORTS PINK

55p

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CHERRIES SEE OFF REDKNAPP'S QPR

Bournemouth v QPR match report – see page 4



WEMBLEY HERE WE COME

Sholing players celebrate after powering through to the FA Vase final with 4-2 second leg win over Eastbourne United. Full report and reaction: Pages 6/7

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HAMPSHIRE CRICKET PRE-SEASON SPECIAL

All you need to know ahead of the 2014 season

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pull-out inside



NON-LEAGUE



Eastleigh's title bid gets a boost

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TERRY PAINE



Saints legend's EXCLUSIVE column

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NON-LEAGUE



Follands' No.11 makes perfect No.1

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FOOTBALL



Swanmore through to county cup final

See page 45

SHATTERED DREAM?

**J-Rod's
World Cup
hopes in
balance**

JAY Rodriguez's World Cup dreams could be over after he suffered a serious looking knee injury in the 4-1 defeat at Manchester City.

The Saints top scorer landed heavily on his right knee midway through the first half at the Etihad

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Stadium and had to be stretched from the pitch in agony while his teammates looked on in horror.

Though the swelling is so bad that no instant diagnosis can take place,

the talk behind the scenes was of ligament damage that will end Rodriguez's season and his chances of going to Brazil with England.

Manager Mauricio Pochettino refused to speculate on the extent of the injury but his tone clearly suggested it was likely to be very serious.

Continued on page 4



AGONY: Jay Rodriguez at the Etihad Stadium. Echo picture by Paul Collins

WIN £49,000 WITH FIND THE BALL – SEE PAGE 12

Saints Spotlight

MAN CITY 4 SAINTS 1: **City slickers are too**

INJURY ADDS DISPLEASURE

SAINTS slipped to a 4-1 defeat at Manchester City but of more concern was the fate of top scorer Jay Rodriguez.

He was stretchered off mid-way through the first half at the Etihad Stadium after landing very heavily on his right knee, which twisted in the process.

Rodriguez appeared to be in tears of pain as he received treatment on the pitch, while his teammates looked visibly shaken and upset by the serious looking injury.

With Roy Hodgson watching from the stands it will throw into doubt whether Rodriguez will recover in time for the World Cup.

The injury came after Rickie Lambert's penalty had cancelled out an early Yaya Toure spot kick.

However, two City goals in first half stoppage time from Samir Nasri and Edin Dzeko, the first of which should have been ruled out for a clear offside, and another in the second period from Stevan Jovetic meant Saints ended up leaving without

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any points and a potentially bad injury for their troubles.

Saints got off to the worst possible start as they conceded a penalty in the opening moments of the game.

Edin Dzeko cut into the area on the left side and threatened to go by on the outside of Jose Fonte.

However, the Saints defender raised his back leg and it connected lightly with Dzeko who went down.

Referee Chris Foy pointed to the spot and after just three minutes Yaya Toure coolly slotted the spot kick into Paulo Gazzaniga's bottom left hand corner with the keeper going the wrong way.

It almost got worse for Saints as moments later Pablo Zabaleta cut the ball back from the right by-line to Samir Nasri

but his first time shot from 12 yards out went narrowly wide.

Saints responded well though and exerted some pressure on Manchester City.

They came close to creating chances several times, the most notable being a cross from the left that was fractionally just too high for Lambert to reach and Lambert's lofted ball over the top that picked out Adam Lallana who couldn't quite bring it under control.

There was a let off on 17 minutes though as Aleksandar Kolarov put a free header from David Silva's free kick over the bar from 12 yards out.

Saints suffered a horrible blow when on 27 minutes Jay Rodriguez had to be stretchered off in agony.

He went to control the ball but landed heavily on his right

knee, twisting it horrendously as he hit the turf.

Rodriguez looked in serious pain and was carried off on a stretcher to be replaced by James Ward-Prowse with his World Cup dreams looking in serious jeopardy with every chance of serious ligament damage having been sustained.

Man City came close to doubling their lead again on 35 minutes as Nasri swung in a pacy free kick from the edge of the right hand side of the area that found Dzeko. He headed towards goal but it clipped the top of the crossbar and went over.

But Saints dramatically won a penalty of their own moments later.

Jack Cork produced a thrusting run forward that was halted just as he entered the top left hand corner of the area by an obvious trip from Zabaleta.

There was no doubting it was a penalty and it was duly awarded by Foy. On 37 minutes Lambert stepped up and dispatched it, Joe Hart going correctly to his left but beaten by the accuracy and power of it.

Fernandinho became the first player in the book for handball. Saints were playing so well but were hit by a sucker punch as Nasri made it 2-1 right at the start of first half stoppage time in controversial circumstances as Mauricio Pochettino's men were on the wrong end of a truly shocking decision.

Toure played the ball to Dzeko who flicked it into Silva. There appeared to be an obvious offside with Silva at least a few yards the wrong side but the flag somehow was not raised.

Silva took full advantage and squared to Nasri who had the simple job of finishing from six yards out.

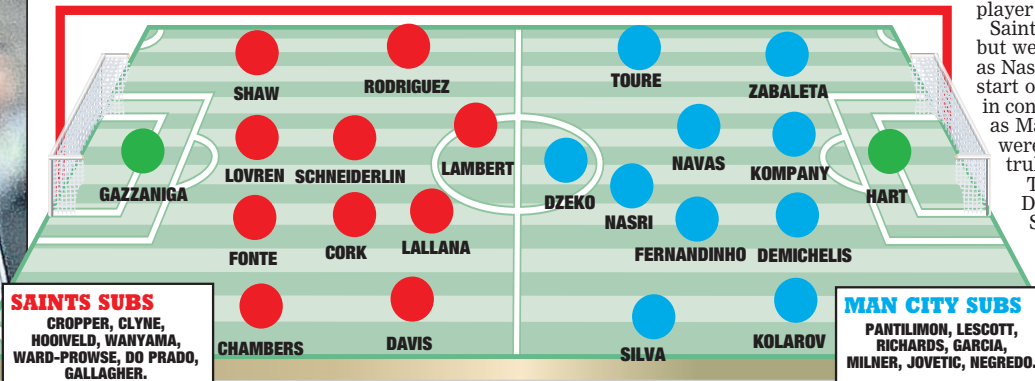
It got even worse as Man City grabbed another at the end of four minutes added time before the break. This owed more to poor defending than a refereeing error as Nasri fed Kolarov on the overlap down the left. He



ON THE SPOT: Manchester City's Yaya Toure scores his side's first from the penalty spot.



NOT HAPPY: Saints boss Mauricio Pochettino looks on as his side capitulate against Man City.



ARTUR Boruc was forced to miss the game against Manchester City due to a back injury.

With Kelvin Davis also sidelined, it meant Paulo Gazzaniga was handed a place in the team at the Etihad Stadium with young American keeper

TEAM NEWS

Cody Cropper on the bench.

The only other change to the team that defeated Newcastle 4-0 was in midfield where Morgan Schneiderlin replaced James Ward-Prowse. That

meant Schneiderlin partnering Jack Cork in a holding midfield role with Steven Davis playing in the three off of Rickie Lambert.

Victor Wanyama and Nathaniel Clyne were fit enough to return to the bench.

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Saints Spotlight

good for Saints, but injury to striker is Poch's main worry

TO POCH'S AT CITY ...



ABOVE: Rickie Lambert fires home from the spot for Saints.



LEFT: Jack Cork is sent tumbling to earn a penalty.

whipped in a cross that picked out Dzeko unmarked and from close range with Gazzaniga having missed the cross he steered home the header for a 3-1 half time lead.

City made a change at the break with Javi Garcia replacing Fernandinho.

They had appeals for yet another penalty turned down as Toure broke away and fell in the box with Fonte putting the

pressure on him with a subtle lean from behind.

Dzeko tested Gazzaniga on 59 minutes with a near post shot from a tight angle on the left.

The keeper pushed it back out and Dzeko fired the rebound high and wide.

City made a second switch on 65 minutes with Alvaro Negredo coming on for Dzeko.

Gazzaniga was pressed into action once again on 68 min-

utes, again once more at his near post, this time with his legs, as Jesus Navas flicked the ball up and drove a volley goalwards.

Garcia was the next player booked for bringing down Lallana.

Negredo was played in on goal on 72 minutes but dwelt on it and Fonte got back to make the challenge.

Lambert so nearly brought Saints back into the game three minutes later as Lallana played him in and from a tight angle on the right the striker drove across goal but just wide of the far post.

Saints made a switch to try and get back into the game with Sam Gallagher replacing Steven Davis before City responded with Stevan Jovetic



SYMPATHY: Rickie Lambert checks on teammate Jay Rodriguez prior to his being stretchered off at the Etihad Stadium.

on for Silva.

Toure was booked moments later for diving as he went down in the area again, this time without contact from Fonte.

Saints made a final change with ten minutes remaining with Victor Wanyama coming on for Cork.

However, it was 4-1 a minute later as a Navas sweeping low cross from the right evaded everybody, including Gazzaniga who got himself totally stranded, and allowed Jovetic the chance to turn into an empty net from eight yards out.

It could have nearly 5-1 almost straight from the kick-off as Negredo was played in one-on-one but Gazzaniga made the save with his legs.

City were threatening again as a cut back to Toure allowed him to shoot from the edge of the area but his curling effort was brilliant turned onto the post by the fingertips of Gazzaniga.

It proved to be the last chance of the game and after the final whistle a clearly emotional Pochettino went onto the pitch to remonstrate with one of the linesmen to round off a day to forget.



GOAL: Rickie Lambert is mobbed after scoring from the spot.

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READ THE TERRY PAINE COLUMN ON PAGE 9



ON TARGET: Lewis Grabban celebrate scoring for Cherries.

Cherries make it an unhappy return for ex-boss Harry

GOALS from Tommy Elphick and Lewis Grabban earned Cherries a famous victory over Championship high-fliers QPR as Eddie Howe's men ruined Harry Redknapp's homecoming.

Elphick opened the scoring on the stroke of half-time with a thumping header before Grabban bagged his 20th of the season to keep alive Cherries' chances of reaching the play-offs.

Armand Traore's finely-taken goal seconds after the restart put the visitors on level terms before Harry Arter saw red for a lunge on Junior Hoilett.

Andrew Surman was restored to the starting line-up as boss Eddie Howe made one change following Cherries' 4-2 win at Birmingham seven days ago.

Cherries striker Yann Kermorgant and QPR skipper Clint Hill both required treatment following a nasty clash of heads after just 10 seconds with the contest held up for around four minutes.

Lee Camp was the first goalkeeper called into action, the Cherries stopper diving to his left to superbly claw away a long-range effort from Jermaine Jenas after 16 minutes.

Camp then clutched a speculative strike from Benoit Assou-Ekotto before Cherries striker Lewis Grabban's low drive was blocked by a defender.

As QPR made most of the early running, Ravel Morrison's shot was helped over the crossbar by Camp before Matt Ritchie's 20-yarder flashed narrowly past the upright.

Shots from Grabban and Marc Pugh were both charged down as Cherries began to find their feet and only a smart save from Rob Green prevented the hosts from taking the lead after 36 minutes.

A sweeping move down the left started by Surman ended with Green beating away Kermorgant's first-time strike after Grabban had picked him out with a precision cross.

Grabban's left-foot strike flew just past the post after Richard Dunne had made a dog's dinner of trying to defend a mule-like clearance from Camp on the stroke of half-time.

Elphick nodded Cherries into the lead in first-half stoppage time when he careered through a posse of players to meet Harte's corner with an unstoppable header from six yards.

Traore levelled just 20 seconds after the break when he neatly controlled a crossfield pass from Tom Carroll and lifted a left-foot shot past Camp from a tight angle.

Surman went close to restoring Cherries' lead when he started and finished a flowing move, his resultant shot from just inside the 18-yard box tipped over the crossbar by Green.

Grabban turned in the loose ball to make it 2-1 after 59 minutes, the striker reacting quickly after Kermorgant's cross from Surman's sublime through ball had found its way to him at the far post.

Green was forced to parry Arter's pot-shot before the Cherries midfielder received a straight red card for a two-footed tackle on Junior Hoilett after 69 minutes.

Kermorgant was immediately sacrificed and replaced by Eunan O'Kane before Ritchie then made way with Ryan Fraser coming on after 74 minutes.

Hoilett traded passes with Austin before lifting a shot over the crossbar, while Green saved with his knees from Grabban after Fraser had sent him clear in the last minute.

Green had to tip Harte's blistering free kick over the crossbar in the second minute of added time before Brett Pitman came off the bench to clear off the line from Dunne in the dying seconds.

Saints Spotlight

TEAR-JERKER: J-ROD'S

Gordon Simpson

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SPORTS REPORTER

IT IS hard to imagine a crueller moment than this for Jay Rodriguez to have suffered such a serious-looking injury.

The Saints forward had been enjoying a wonderful few months, playing the best football of his career, and emerging as a serious contender for a place at the World Cup.

Yet the opportunity to continue his magnificent season, and his hopes of making it to Brazil this summer, might have been wrecked in one horrible moment at the Etihad Stadium.

Leaping to bring a high ball under control, Rodriguez landed awkwardly on his right knee, which appeared to buckle as it hit the turf.

A look of excruciating pain, not to mention concern, was painted all over the 24-year-old's face as he fell to the ground in agony.

At one point, Rodriguez appeared to be wiping away tears.

The hope will be that, once the swelling has subsided, he will discover the injury is not as bad as feared.

'At one point, Rodriguez appeared to be wiping away tears'



NEAR MISS: Ricky Lambert shoots just wide in the second half.

Poch: It's not looking good

■ From front page

"To be completely honest it's not looking good," said the rueful Saints boss, pictured right.

"We need to assess him today and tomorrow but it's not looking good.

"It's not going to be good for him, it's not good for the team."

He added: "I can't really know exactly what's wrong with him or when I'm going to see him again in a Southampton shirt.

"We need to analyse him today and tomorrow and know the exact reality of his injury.

"All the players are really affected, not just about the result, not just about the refereeing decisions, but more than anything about the doubt of

how severe his injury is."

Pochettino was also furious over key refereeing decisions that he felt went against his side.

He was angry with the decision to award City an early penalty as Edin Dzeko went down in the box under the challenge of Jose Fonte while the second goal was clearly well offside.

"I think there's two decisions that killed the game – the penalty that we conceded and the second goal. Those two moments killed the game," fumed Pochettino.

"The only positive I can think of is that the first 45 minutes we were superior to a team

that is actually equipped to win the Premier League.

"But to beat a team like Manchester City, a team that is full of world class players, not only do you need to have the perfect game but also the refereeing decisions have to be fair and that did not happen.

"I have just seen it on TV and I don't think you can give a penalty like that after just two minutes.

"I think it's unexplainable and I think it's not right.

"The second decision that did not go our way was a clear offside and it was clearly two metres offside and it did seem like a type of game you play at school where you get these dumb refereeing decisions."



But it certainly did not look good.

Rodriguez received applause from all sides of the ground as he was carried off the pitch on a stretcher, while receiving oxygen.

One of the men looking on at the sad scene from the stands was the England manager, Roy Hodgson.

Rodriguez, who made his international debut earlier in the season, and who had scored five goals in his previous four games, had become an increasingly realistic choice for Hodgson this summer.

The former Burnley man was far from guaranteed a place, but the England boss will undoubtedly be disappointed if he has indeed lost one of his potentially most exciting attacking options.

It can only be hoped that Rodriguez will still yet have a chance to strengthen his case for the tournament.

With the way he has played and improved this season, he certainly deserves the opportunity.

Hodgson could at least enjoy another good performance from Rodriguez's fellow Saints forward,

LATEST PREMIER LEAGUE STANDINGS - SEE BACK PAGE

Saints Spotlight

WORLD CUP IN BALANCE



SHOCKER: Saints players react as teammate Jay Rodriguez lies injured during the Barclays Premier League match at the Etihad Stadium.

Rickie Lambert.

The striker proved a handful for Manchester City, particularly in the first half.

His vision and passing ability nearly unlocked the hosts' defence on a number of occasions, with a sublime chipped pass for Adam Lallana, who couldn't bring the ball under control, the highlight.

Lambert once again showcased his supreme penalty-taking skills, cancelling out Yaya Toure's early spot kick, after Jack Cork was tripped.

It was as good an effort as you will ever see from 12 yards, and City goalkeeper Joe Hart, even at full stretch, couldn't keep it out.

Lambert has now converted 34 of 34 penalties since joining Saints and, given England's dreadful record on spot kicks, that may be an additional factor in his favour when Hodgson comes to select his squad next month.



SPOT ON: Rickie Lambert scores from the spot and, inset, celebrates with Adam Lallana.

Daily Echo pictures by Paul Collins

City get one over on title rivals Totton

CITY Central booked their place in the final of the City of Southampton Sunday Football League's AJ Miller Trophy with a clinical 2-0 win over Totton Town last weekend.

The sides, who currently occupy the top two spots in league's Premier Division, were separated by a Courtney Campbell strike at half-time and James Thomson settled it for City in the second half.

Meanwhile, in league action, Sky Blues had no luck at all in their clash with AFC Bursledon.

The Blues, who are locked in a relegation battle with AFC Riverside, started with just eight men, but made it in to the break at 0-0.

Sky Blues' late-comers eventually turned up, but an injury saw them back down to ten men, and then Sean Nutbeen's strike condemned them to defeat.

AFC Riverside were not able to take advantage of Sky Blues' ill luck, as they went down 3-2 at Chartwell Green.

Sam Robson and Mike Collins were on target for Riverside, while David Lawson and Tony Sullivan (2) netted for Green.

The division's only other game also ended 3-2, with FC Railway just having the edge over visiting Obelisk.

In Junior 2 Callum Ovenden's ankle injury didn't stop him bagging a hat-trick in LH Galaxy's 3-2 win at Fleming Sports. Ricky Marchant and Martyn Payne were on target for Sports.

RS Ocean Village kept up their pursuit of likely title winners AFC Portswood with a 6-1 win at Lokomotiv Eastleigh. Akbar Shah hit a double, Ben Dawkins got a hat-trick and Steve Angel got one for Village, with Danny Mead hitting the lone reply.

In Junior 3 AFC Bishopstoke came out best in an eight-goal thriller with AFC Velmore. Ryan Young (2), Peter Sherlock (2) and Justin Beckett were on target for Bishopstoke, while Jamie Johnson, Hayden Tuck and Ash Hibberd hit the net for Velmore.

Bridge Reserves drew 1-1 with Boyatt Wood Wanderers, while King George went down 3-1 at home to Landguard Rovers, with Ben Peters (2) and Akintolu Tunde on target.

Ben Hatcher, Connor Price and Jamie Keyte were on target for Titans in their 3-1 victory over Chartwell Green Reserves, for whom James Russo scored.



COURTNEY CAMPBELL

MAN CITY v SAINTS REACTION IN MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO

Non-league Action

Diaper tactics spot on

SHOLING manager Dave Diaper told his side to go out "all guns blazing" in his team-talk before they reached the final of the FA Vase for the first time in the club's history by beating Eastbourne United 4-2 in the semi-final second leg in East Sussex.

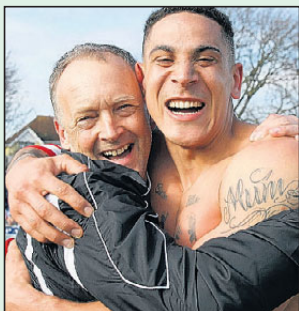
The Boatmen fired themselves to a 6-4 aggregate win and it was Diaper's tactics and decision to play Mike Carter and Alex Sawyer in the centre midfield berths and, usual middle man, Byron Mason as one of the strikers, that saw his side secure a Wembley date in May, writes **PETER HOWARD**.

An own goal by Joe Dryer, Carter, captain Byron Mason and Nick Watts got the goals that secured the historic moment, which saw the players and coaches celebrate in front of the travelling supporters.

"This without a doubt the biggest day in the club's history, I want the people of Southampton come out and really show their support for Sholing," said Diaper.

"My planning starts Sunday or Monday for Wembley, much of the research depends on who we have in the final – but for now I'm going to enjoy the victory and go out with the boys.

"I'm absolutely speechless, tremendous stuff; I mean this team have already pushed my heart to its limits many times



CELEBRATION: Sholing boss Dave Diaper, left, and Byron Mason. Order no: 18262345

and today was no different.

"I told them before the game that it was imperative we turned up today, tactically I made a few changes and it paid off.

"We didn't turn up in the first game (the 2-2 draw in the first leg) and I said to them 'if we're going to get knocked out of a competition go out all guns blazing, go out knowing we've given our all'.

"We were too frightened to lose in the first match. This was about saying that if you want Wembley you can't be scared to play.

"I told the lads that this was just half-time and we've got to deal with their style of play which is very effective.

"But we've dealt with it weathered the storm and the fourth goal was so important for us."

In the second half United got two goals back and were in the ascendancy before substitute Watts grabbed his goal on the break as Lewis Fennimore delivered the ball into the box.

"If they had scored a third they would have won the game," said Diaper. "I was looking at the clock and it wasn't moving as fast as I wanted it to."

Sholing face West Auckland in the final.

SHOLING MARCH

Diaps' men reach FA Vase final at Wembley

**EASTBOURNE UTD 2
SHOLING 4**

(Sholing through 6-4 on agg)

SUPER Sholing's March to the Arch has reached its final destination.

Dave Diaper's Boatmen have become the fourth Sydenhams Wessex League side to reach the FA Vase final thanks to an imperious first half performance at Eastbourne United this afternoon.

Having been held 2-2 at home, Sholing came racing out of the blocks to go 3-0 up at half-time in front of a 1,426 crowd in East Sussex.

United were a different proposition in the second half, pulling the game back to 3-2, but the Southampton side rode the storm and scored a late goal through sub Nick Watts to book their trip to North London on May 10.

Both teams made changes from last Saturday's 2-2 draw at Portsmouth Road.

Sholing boss Dave Diaper opted for the energy of Mike Carter in midfield and put Tyronne Bowers at right-back.

Powerhouse

Alex Sawyer also came into the midfield equation at the expense of Lewis Fennimore, while powerhouse skipper Byron Mason joined Lee Wort up front.

The good news for the Boatmen was that Eastbourne frontman Ryan McBride – scorer of their second goal last week – was suspended.

Dual-signed Horsham striker Ashley Robinson replaced him and the gritty Jamie Crellin came into midfield.

Sholing began busily and, with Marvin McLean again looking lively down the left, Carter shot over inside the first two minutes.

The Boatmen continued to make the running, forcing two corners in quick succession in the ninth minute.

The first, swung in from the right by Marc Diaper, was headed out for another by the under-pressure home defence.



Wendy Gee

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

This time Bowers delivered from the left and, under pressure from Diaper, Joe Dryer headed into his own goal.

Manager Diaper appeared to have got his tactics spot-on as Sholing's wealth of attacking options caused Eastbourne no end of problems.

The home side hacked the ball

clear from inside the six-yard box following more good work by McLean and the two Mason brothers, and then Wort played in McLean down the left and the sprightly winger eased past his marker on the by-line before getting too much power on his shot across goal.

Following another Sholing corner, Wort then set up Bowers who completely missed his shot.

But that was about the only cheery sight for the home fans, who were thanking their lucky stars on 20 minutes when Byron Mason

delivered from the right, teeing up Sawyer who turned sharply on the edge of the box and fired just wide.

Unleashed

Sawyer, who was frequently darting forward from midfield, then unleashed another effort straight at the keeper.

It was his fellow midfielder Carter who gave the Boatmen an all-important second goal on 26 minutes.

Diaper took a throw from the left

WENDY GEE'S NON-LEAGUE NEWS STARTS ON PAGE 37

Non-league Action

ON TO THE ARCH

ALL SMILES: Sholing players after securing a place in the FA Vase final. Daily Echo picture by Chris Moorhouse Order no: 18262424



and, following good work by Byron Mason and Wort, the ball came to CARTER 20 yards out.

He eased past one defender, made space for himself and beat keeper Grant Young with a firm, low drive.

Eastbourne made a half-hearted appeal for a penalty when Pete Castle backed into Matt MacLean, but it was clutching at straws by United who, thus far, were being totally outplayed by the Wessex visitors.

Such was Sholing's dominance that it looked to be a matter of how many they would score and, but for

a fine save by Young, Wort would have added a third on 34 minutes from skipper Byron Mason's assist.

Flurry

There was a brief flurry of Eastbourne activity in the 36th minute, but visiting keeper Matt Brown did well to pick Robinson's delivery out of the air before hard-working winger McLean helped out with a superbly timed defensive tackle.

But Sholing responded in positive

fashion and, on 41 minutes, the buoyant Boatmen made it 3-0.

First Barry Mason had a goal-bound effort cleared after unleashing an audacious volley from the edge of the box.

Eastbourne failed to clear the danger and this time brother BYRON MASON obliged by finding the far bottom corner with a first-time dig from the right of the area.

United brought on attacking substitute Jason Taylor for left-back Scott Dartnall at half-time and their re-jigged side emerged far hungrier for the second half.

The home side were furious six minutes in when Sholing keeper Matt Brown came to punch the ball, clattering into Taylor in the process, but no penalty was given.

The Eastbourne sub – playing his first game since December following a broken leg – was so incensed that he talked his way into the referee's notebook.

That just seemed to make United even more determined and, after Tate had had an effort cleared off the line, they continued to bombard the Sholing box and pulled a goal back on 57 minutes.

Tate delivered the ball from the right, Jack Divall nodded back across goal and MacLEAN buried the header to make it 3-1.

Sholing responded with Carter playing in Barry Mason, but Young was sharply off his line to save at his feet.

With Eastbourne battling for every ball, it was important for the Boatmen to match them physically.

Barry Mason played his part by earning a 65th-minute free kick, but Pete Castle's header from Diaper's delivery was disallowed for offside.

Eastbourne, though, simply refused to lie down and rocked Sholing's boat with a second goal on 68 minutes.

Carter tripped sub Taylor as he jinked left to right across the edge of the Sholing area.

The danger looked to have been snuffed out when Robinson kicked the free kick into Sholing's defensive wall.

But the ball fell to Tate who hit a fearsome low shot from the edge of the box which Brown couldn't hold and CRELLIN was there to bury the loose ball.

Sholing made a double substitution with 12 nail-biting minutes remaining – first the injured Sawyer hobbling off to be replaced by Lewis Fennimore and then Nick Watts going on for Barry Mason.

For Eastbourne, Luke Denton replaced Joe Dryer.

Burying

All those stoppages worked in Sholing's favour initially, but United quickly stepped up the pace again, bombarding the Boatmen's box with a succession of high balls and making life as uncomfortable as possible for keeper Brown.

There was a close call on 88 minutes when Jack Divall shot wide from distance.

But, from living on their nerves, Sholing's vocal band of Ultras supporters were in full cry in the 89th minute when sub Watts made the game safe.

Watts initiated the move, finding Fennimore on the right. He looked up and crossed for Wort whose shot was blocked at close quarters.

But the ball ran free to WATTS, who took a touch before burying the ball right-footed to seal Sholing's passage to Wembley.



WINNER: Stuart Fleetwood.

Eastleigh title boost

EASTLEIGH twice came from behind before beating Whitehawk 3-2 at a soaking wet Silverlake Stadium – a result which coincided with defeats for Skril Conference South title rivals Bromley and Sutton United.

Bromley lost 1-0 at Havant & Waterlooville and Sutton United crashed 3-2 at lowly Maidenhead United.

It means Eastleigh take a five-point lead into Tuesday night's crunch match in North Kent, writes MIKE VIMPANY.

Relegation threatened Whitehawk stunned the Spitfires by snatching a seventh minute lead.

Richard Rose weaved his way in on the right-hand side of the box and picked out Hawks top scorer DANNY MILLS, who headed his 13th goal of the season past Ross Flitney.

But seven minutes later BEN WRIGHT grabbed a stunning equaliser, drilling a sublime 25-yarder past the despairing arms of goalkeeper Chris Winterton.

Eastleigh forced several corners but much changed Hawks counter-attacked effectively with Dean McDonald pulling the mid-field strings.

The greasy surface contributed to a lively encounter which swung Whitehawk's away on the half hour when Will Evans conceded a penalty – awarded on the advice of the referee's assistant for a rather needless challenge on the sprawling Mills.

Former Brighton midfielder JAKE ROBINSON sent Flitney the wrong way from the spot to restore Hawk's lead.

But three minutes later Eastleigh were back on level terms at 2-2 from a Michael Green corner.

CHRIS TODD climbed at the far post to win an aerial challenge with goalkeeper Winterton, who was stuck on his line.

Before half-time and with things becoming feisty, Eastleigh skipper Glenn Southam was booked just before Flitney flung himself to his right to deny Steve Smith.

Ten minutes into the second half Eastleigh grabbed what proved to be their third and winning goal.

STUART FLEETWOOD drilled a low shot into the goalmouth, which cannoned off defender Sami El-Abd and past the goalkeeper for the winner.

TODAY'S NON-LEAGUE RESULTS - SEE BACK PAGE



MARKUS LIEBHERR

HAS it really been five years since the late Markus Liebherr bought Southampton Football club and set in motion the events that has seen Southampton Football Club rise from -10 points in League One to eighth in the Premier League?

By any stretch of the imagination, it has been an astonishing story, from relegation "certainties" to a role model for modern top flight clubs in the space of five short years.

It really has been extraordinary stuff.

Whilst we, as football fans, sometimes bemoan the odd defeat, criticise the club for missing out on players in transfer windows and bicker over the team selections and the tactics employed, it can never be a bad thing to take stock and look at the journey rather the destination.

Sometimes I honestly feel we are the victims of our own success – that we've somehow become accustomed to relative success and sometimes don't fully appreciate just how good we have it here at Southampton.

The disclosure that we owe £27 million in transfer fees has drawn headlines from the tabloids.

The club posted a net loss of £7.1million and will enter the summer window



owing £27million in outstanding transfer fees.

A bill in excess of £30m is also pending for their new training ground. You could almost hear the sound of tabloid media hacks sharpening their pencils in anticipation. Cocky little Southampton, with their delusions of grandeur, who did they think they were?

It may just be me, but the thought of owing £27 million in transfer fees for a side that is pushing Manchester United for seventh place seems a bit of a bargain.

If you bear in mind that Saints will probably recoup at least half of that transfer debt when we sell Dani Osvaldo, that amount isn't really that much to worry about.

The £30 million for the Academy? It's amusing that the press now think that's a shocking amount for what is generally considered the best youth academy in the country.

Not so long ago, when Adam Lallana and Luke Shaw featured for England, the same press felt the Saints academy was the future of English football – now a £30 million bill for it is a portent of imminent disaster.

In any realistic world, a debt of £27 million is a massive amount, but this is the world of football we're talking about where clubs can stay in business whilst, owing over £120 million.

Modern football is built on debt, that's not up for debate.

I'd had an amusing conversation with a Manchester United fan who took great relish at a BBC headline regarding our transfer debt.

After advising him how funny it was that a Manchester United fan obviously viewed us as real opposition, it was pointed out to him that Manchester United is still a club built on debt.

Pretty much every club that is seriously chasing silverware in the Premier

League is based on debt of one sort or another, either in regards to the amount of money the owners have paid to buy the club, the amount of money they've paid for their new stadium or debt they've accrued in wages and transfer fees that are dependent on a rich owner to pay for.

In short, for Saints to make that next step, to challenge for anything other than treading water, then money has to be spent.

The only concern should be if there's nothing in place to support that debt.

We're not Pompey, we're not spending money with no infrastructure and no supporting network. We're a valid, vibrant football club that, with a little bit more effort and a bit more promotion abroad, can become a profitable, viable business.

It doesn't free us, as fans, of the responsibility of asking questions of our football club.

If we don't question authority, even during the good times, then we're no better than the shambolic rabble down the road who sat on their hands and never questioned where the money came from that was allegedly financing their rise to success.

I'm proud of my football club but I will always question it. Those fans who don't are destined to follow Pompey into oblivion...

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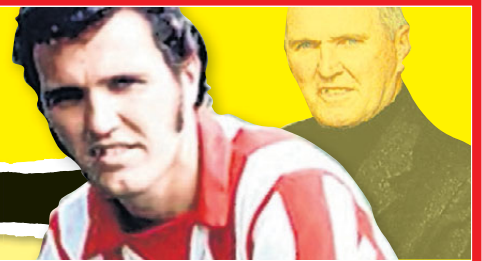
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STERLING HAS TO BE CURRENCY OF CHOICE

IN DEMAND: Liverpool striker Raheem Sterling has shown his worth to Liverpool with some scintillating displays this season.

IT was reminiscent of the Anfield glory days – pace, width and some scintillating forward play.

Not since Liverpool last lifted the title have they had players that could set the Anfield turf alight quite like this bunch.

Footballers that create air of expectation every time they get on the ball. It has been a long time since Liverpool were last perched at the top of the league, and with just six matches remaining that is where they currently find themselves.

Last Sunday they swept past a feeble Tottenham team that has been in steady decline since the departure of Gareth Bale, but even that couldn't undermine the progress that Liverpool have made this season.

While Suarez and Sturridge have been receiving plaudits from all and sundry, it was another fleet-footed forward that took home the man-of-the-match on Sunday, and thoroughly deserved it was.

I speak of course of Raheem Sterling, whose form this season has made him a shoe-in for the England World Cup squad. His performance against Spurs on Sunday exemplified the progress that he has made this season under the guidance of Brendan Rodgers.

Having burst onto the scene as a 17-year old in a Roy Hodgson managed Liverpool team, Sterling was always earmarked as a player with extraordinary potential.

Of course the early hype equated to that old English adage of "too much, too soon". Rumours of off-the-field problems wouldn't quite leave him alone and his form suffered. His re-emergence under Brendan Rodgers at the start of last season had England fans salivating at the prospect of this young prodigy bursting up the touchline for the national team, but again his form dwindled and he was largely left out of the Liverpool team towards the end of the campaign.

Things weren't any better come the start of this season, with Brendan Rodgers, pictured below, commenting in September that the teenager "needs to stabilize his life" following a court appearance on the charge of common assault. His career was on the rails, the risk of another career squandered.

Thankfully since then his path has straightened. Often shirked off the ball in his earlier appearances, his industry and physical strength improved as the work on the training field started to pay off. It was not until December that he completed 90 minutes in a Liverpool jersey, scoring and notching up an assist in a 5-1 victory over Norwich. Since then he has gone from strength to strength, and Brendan Rodgers must be commended for his work with the youngster.

Sterling has always possessed blistering pace, but it is his boundless improvement in the technical aspects of the game that have surprised many. It is a common tragedy in football that those blessed with such natural speed often fail at the final ball. Sterling certainly fell into this category, and indeed he still does when it comes to his accuracy in front of goal. What he has added to his game is the ability to get his head up, to show vision when

required, and the skill to execute the pass he sees in his minds eye.

His pass to set up Daniel Sturridge's opener in Liverpool's 4-3 victory against Swansea was as good a ball as you're likely to see this season. Reminiscent of Gerrard or even Scholes in their pomp, he curled the ball with the outside of his right boot perfectly into the path of his onrushing England colleague. It not only showed his promise, but the confidence that is coursing through his veins at present.

On Sunday, he may have had two more assists to his name were it not for a wayward shot from Jordan Henderson and a spectacular save from Hugo Lloris. The latter was a beautiful ball stood up to the far post for Luis Suarez. Such vision has seen Brendan Rodgers utilise him in a more central role, showing his flexibility that will undoubtedly be an asset for England in the summer.

The match against Tottenham marked Sterling's 71st appearance for Liverpool in all competitions and a return to the starting line-up after being a substitute against Sunderland and Cardiff City. While that may seem like a remarkable number of appearances for a lad so young, Brendan Rodgers has used him sparingly enough for him to still be fresh come June.

He must surely be one of the first names on Roy Hodgson's squad list for Brazil, along with his Liverpool counterparts. Credit must be given to the Anfield club, who, like Southampton, have trusted in local talent and are reaping the rewards.

Could Powell be the future for United?

FOR the last few years, Manchester United's midfield woes have been well documented.

A plethora of the game's big names have been linked with Old Trafford moves, in an attempt to bring in some much needed creativity and forward thinking to the middle of United's midfield.

Yet whilst David Moyes' special team of scouts will no doubt be scanning the globe in search of talented midfielders, one has to wonder if they shouldn't look closer to home first.

Finding a proper position for Nick Powell going forward is very important for Manchester United.

Powell recently added another goal to his remarkable tally for Wigan Athletic and now has 12 goals to his name for the Latics, which makes him their top scorer and United's most prolific loan star.

Powell, who was one of Sir Alex Ferguson's last signings as Manchester United manager, is a remarkable talent and was always destined for great things so it was no surprise when United made their move for the Crewe Alexandra attacker back in 2012.

The 20-year-old will surely get a chance in the Red Devils' first team next season after his heroics at Wigan but David Moyes needs to find the right position for the talented youngster. Powell was Crewe Alexander's stand-out player in the 2011-2012 season netting 16 goals in 45 appearances to earn a £4 million move to Old Trafford.

The youngster is capable of operating in a number of positions including forward, attacking midfielder and central midfielder but has mostly been used as a forward during his time at Crewe and Wigan Athletic which is why he is so prolific in front of goal. Sir Alex Ferguson used him as a central midfielder on his debut and in the Champions League game against Galatasaray.

The 20-year-old is a fantastic finisher and is good at keeping possession, which can be an asset for United's much-criticised midfield.

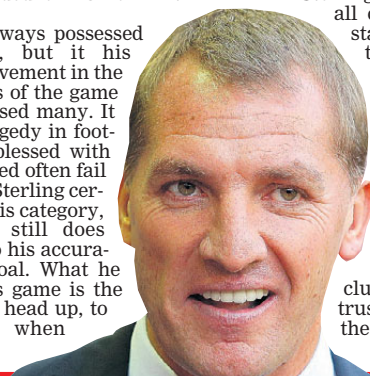
Moyes must give his young star a fair chance in the team or risk losing him to a rival club much like former Manchester United player Paul Pogba (another one linked with an expensive return to Old Trafford).

Swansea, who previously managed to snap up Liverpool target Jonjo Shelvey, are rumoured to be interested in Powell so United will have to watch out.

If Powell keeps his head on his shoulders and continues his impressive displays in a midfield role at Manchester United then he could join the likes of Bryan Robson, Lou Macari, Denis Law and Paul Scholes as one of the many great midfielders to put on the famous red shirt.



NICK POWELL



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Saints Spotlight

SAINTS talent Jack Stephens seems to be proving a lucky charm as Swindon Town make a late charge for a League One promotion play-off spot, writes MIKE VIMPANY.

The promising 20-year old Southampton defender went on loan to Swindon a month ago – his arrival at the County Ground coinciding with a four-match unbeaten run which has seen the Robins climb to within four points of a play-off berth. Stephens, signed by Saints from Plymouth Argyle for £150,000 three years ago, made his debut in Swindon's goal-less draw at Bristol City on March 15, and has since featured in victories over Preston North End (1-0), Tranmere Rovers (2-1) and Sheffield United (2-1).

Speaking after Swindon's last gasp win over play-off rivals Sheffield United last week, he modestly played down his role in Swindon's upturn in fortunes.

He said: "Obviously I've come in and we've had four good results but I think that's down to the man-management skills of Mark Cooper.

"We've got a lot of young players here and he's changed the formation and given us the belief that we can go on and reach the play-offs.

"We've just got to carry on now and keep doing really well.

"Sheffield United was our third win in a row and after each win you start to think 'we're not too far from the play-offs'.

"Peterborough are four points ahead of us with a game in hand. We can only concentrate on us but there's a lot of positivity going around the changing room."

GLORY DAYS

Cooper, whose father Terry played left-back for Leeds United in the glory days of the early 1970s, was capped 20 times for England and later became Saints' European scout in the Gordon Strachan managerial era, is delighted with the form of Stephens since his arrival at the County Ground.

"Southampton have watched him each time he's played for us. They've logged his performances and I'd imagine their scouts have gone home with glowing reports," Cooper said.

"Jack is set to remain with us until the end of the season, with his loan deal up on May 3 after our final match with Rotherham United.

"There's an on-going dialogue with Southampton over his progress here and they are very happy with his development."

Stephens oozed class in a central defensive role against Sheffield United last week.

He looked remarkably mature and coped well on the ball under a lot of second half pressure from United, who face Hull City in the FA Cup semi-final at Wembley next week-end.

"Jack's got good pace, he's very calm on the ball and a great prospect," Cooper enthused.

Stephens, whose solitary taste of first team football at Saints was in the FA Cup against Coventry City in January 2012 when he came on as a second half substitute for Dan Harding, leapt at the chance of a loan deal at Swindon until the end of the season.

SAINTS LOANEE'S A CRACKER JACK



"Southampton have watched him and I imagine their scouts have gone home with glowing reports."

FLASHBACK: Jack Stephens in action for Saints U21s during a pre-season friendly at AFC Totton in 2011.

"I knew a few days before the Bristol City game that I'd be coming up here and I've really enjoyed it so far.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my season for Saints Under-21 and we've been reasonably successful, but I felt and the club felt that, for my own development, it was the right time to go out on loan.

"Ten games playing in League 1 for a team playing the right way, trying to push the ball around is just what I needed.

"It was unlikely I was going to break through (into the first team) at Saints this season, so it's a perfect opportunity to come to Swindon and help them try to reach the play-offs.

"The most important thing is that I'm playing Football League games here, which gives me a platform to go back to Southampton and give it a right good crack in the next pre-season and evaluate the situation from there."

Stephens, who made five Plymouth Argyle appearances before joining Saints, said how much he had enjoyed life at St Mary's since the arrival of Mauricio Pochettino.

"It was a big, big change. All the lads responded really well and the proof is there to see now. They are having a really good season," he said.

"The coaching has been superb – a lot of one-on-one's and the defenders, midfielders and so on work in a group. It's been really refreshing.

"It's been brilliant training with lads like Ricky Lambert, Adam Lallana and Jay Rodriguez and I'm not surprised they're in the England squad.

"You play against them every now and again in training."

BETTER PLAYER

"When you are doing well you get pushed up.

"It's a great experience playing against them, albeit in a training environment, and it's certainly going to make me a better player."

When Stephens signed for Saints in April 2011 – three years ago this weekend – they were a League 1 club.

"When I arrived you could see they were too good for that and they quickly went back up again. It was a bit of a surprise to see us go straight through the Championship, but when you've got the momentum it goes like that.

"They've done really well in the Premier League. The second season is always crucial.

"You see a lot of clubs do well in their first season up and then go down the second, but Saints have just got better and better. These are really exciting times."

For the time being though, Stephens must plot Saints' progress from across the Wiltshire county border. Swindon have six matches left, starting at Carlisle United today, with promotion chasing Brentford next up at the County Ground in seven days time.

"Saints are happy with the way I've started and I've just got to keep going. There are six games left and they've said 'keep going, keep playing as you are and we'll re-evaluate it at the end of the season,'" said the centre-back.

"It's great to be here, great to play games and see how we are at the end of the season."

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Adams confident ahead of the new season

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SMILE PLEASE: Hampshire Cricket committee member Suzanne Marlow takes a picture during Hampshire's pre-season press call at The Ageas Bowl on Thursday.

SO MUCH TO LOOK FORWARD TO ...

Simon Walter

simon.walter@dailyecho.co.uk

CRICKET REPORTER

JIMMY Adams is looking forward to having James Vince as his vice-captain.

Vince has been picked out as a future Hampshire captain in all formats after impressing during the last year in particular.

He replaces Dimi Mascarenhas as Hampshire's new T20 captain, as well as assisting Adams in the LV County Championship and the new 50-over competition.

"There's been no doubt about his potential for a number of years and he came on a huge amount last year, things really clicked for him," says Adams.

"I don't think it's any coincidence at all that he matured as a person as his cricket came on leaps and bounds.

"This time last year he might have been seen as a left-field pick. But the way he went about last season and, by all accounts, his winter with the Lions is a really good thing for him and the club.

Confident and competitive

"He thinks about the game and he's confident and competitive with a lot of strong leadership traits that bode well for the club down the line."

Vince was outstanding last year, scoring an aggregate of 1,766 runs. Adams believes he will thrive with the extra responsibility.

"We don't want to inhibit his game because hopefully he'll be in the frame for England, but he



REALLY HAPPY: Hampshire captain Jimmy Adams.

seems OK with it and I think he'll do well," Adams continued.

"It might be that in hindsight he could do without some pressures here and there but pressure will follow him around - he'll be stepping up a level at some point."

The arrival of Dale Benkenstein as first-team coach, with Giles White taking on a director of cricket role, also alters the dynamic of Hampshire's leadership group, for the better.

"Dale's input has been good, the guys have responded really well to him," said Adams. "These are exciting times but it's very easy to say that in April!

"We've made some good additions throughout the winter, which makes for trickier decisions come selection.

"No doubt there will be disappointed people for this game and throughout the year, but that's the nature of a successful side.

"We have to try and get the balance of the side right and make sure we start well. A few guys are feeling their way but we have a strong unit now, everyone has confidence in the whole group.

Additional pressure

"Will Smith has a huge amount of four-day experience and Colesy (Matt Coles) showed what he can do at the end of last year.

"He has a knack of making things happen, he offers something different with ball and is handy with the bat as well.

"We're really happy with where we're at but it's up to us to deliver on the pitch. At this point of every season you look forward to it.

"We've had time to recharge the batteries, certainly this year we do have a little extra depth in terms of personnel and quality.

"But with that optimism comes additional pressure and there are good sides in division two."

Surrey are the promotion favourites. "It's a powerful club with a lot of depth, they'll be extremely disappointed if they find themselves out of the top one and certainly the top two," continued Adams.

"Essex are strong on paper and Kent are also due a better season. They look strong with Doug Bollinger as their overseas.

"But we can only control what we do.

We want to make sure teams have to play out of their skin to beat us, which wasn't the case in a few too many games last year."

Come in No 4

REPLACING Neil McKenzie's runs will be Hampshire's hardest task this year, but Liam Dawson is hoping to have the No.4 limited-overs role.

Dawson will continue at No. 3 in Hampshire's LV County Championship side following his success there last year, **writes SIMON WALTER.**

But he wants McKenzie's position in Hampshire's one-day side.

He said: "I don't know what my role will be in one-day

Continued on page 17



LIAM DAWSON

THE SPORTS PINK - GREAT COVERAGE OF HAMPSHIRE CRICKET

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight

COUNTY CHAMPIONS, TOP RUNSCORERS AND LEADING WICKET-TAKERS SINCE HAMPSHIRE FIRST WON THE TITLE IN 1961

1961: Hampshire
Runs: Bill Alley (Somerset)2,532
Wkts: Derek Shackleton (Hants)153

1962: Yorkshire
Runs: Jimmy Gray (Hampshire) ...2,196
Wkts: Derek Shackleton (Hants)161

1963: Yorkshire
Runs: Peter Richardson (Kent)1,798
Wkts: Ken Palmer (Somerset)121

1964: Worcestershire
Runs: Tom Graveney (Worcs)2,271
Wkts: Derek Shackleton (Hants)138

1965: Worcestershire
Runs: David Green (Lancashire) ...1,784
Wkts: Derek Shackleton (Hants)133

1966: Yorkshire
Runs: Tony Lewis (Glamorgan)1,960
Wkts: Derek Underwood (Kent)143

1967: Yorkshire
Runs: Arthur Milton (Gloucs)1,971
Wkts: Tom Cartwright (Warwicks)132

1968: Yorkshire
Runs: B Richards (Hampshire) ...2,039
Wkts: Bob Cottam (Hampshire)122

1969: Glamorgan
Runs: Brian Luckhurst (Kent)1,593
Wkts: Mike Procter (Gloucs)103

1970: Kent
Runs: Glenn Turner (Worcs)2,346
Wkts: Don Shepherd (Glamorgan)101

1971: Surrey
Runs: Geoffrey Boycott (Yorkshire) 2,197
Wkts: Lance Gibbs (Warwicks)123

1972: Warwickshire
Runs: Mushtaq (Northants)1,743
Wkts: Tom Cartwright (Somerset)93

1973: Hampshire
Runs: Gordon Greenidge (Hants) ...1,620
Wkts: Peter Lee (Lancashire)96

1974: Worcestershire
Runs: Roy Virgin (Northants)1,845
Wkts: Andy Roberts (Hampshire)111

1975: Leicestershire
Runs: Geoffrey Boycott (Yorks) ...1,891
Wkts: Peter Lee (Lancashire)107

1976: Middlesex
Runs: Zaheer Abbas (Gloucs)2,431
Wkts: Sarfraz Nawaz (Northants)82

1977: Kent, Middlesex (shared)
Runs: Viv Richards (Somerset)2,090
Wkts: Mike Procter (Gloucs)108

1978: Kent
Runs: Dennis Amiss (Warwicks) ...2,001
Wkts: Derek Underwood (Kent)110

1979: Essex
Runs: Glenn Turner (Worcs)1,669
Wkts: Derek Underwood (Kent)104

1980: Middlesex
Runs: Peter Kirsten (Derbyshire) ...1,891
Wkts: Robin Jackman (Surrey)114

1981: Nottinghamshire
Runs: Zaheer Abbas (Gloucs)2,230
Wkts: Richard Hadlee (Notts)105

1982: Middlesex
Runs: A Kallicharran (Warwicks) ...2,118
Wkts: Malcolm Marshall (Hants)134

1983: Essex (2)
Runs: Ken McEwan (Essex)2,051
Wkts: Derek Underwood (Kent)105

1984: Essex
Runs: Graham Gooch (Essex)2,281
Wkts: Richard Hadlee (Notts)117

Continued on page 36

Simon Walter

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CRICKET REPORTER

HE might be new to Hampshire, but Dale Benkenstein has long had an affinity with the county – through all-time greats Robin Smith, Barry Richards and Malcolm Marshall.

Hampshire's first-team coach has been in his role for less than a month but is indelibly linked to the county, having spent his formative years learning the game in a net at the home of Robin and Chris Smith in Durban.

Not only that, but 20 years ago he began his first-class career for Natal under the captaincy of Malcolm Marshall, a significant early influence on his career.

And his dad was best man to Barry Richards, who remains a close family friend.

"Hampshire's very new to me but it's amazing," he says, as he reflects on his journey to the Ageas Bowl, where Marshall Drive, the Robin Smith Suite and The Richards Suite are part of the ground's fabric.

"Robin and Chris Smith used to live half a kilometre away from where I was brought up in Durban, they were the only people we knew in the whole country who had a net in their back garden," laughs the 39-year-old, who was a young boy at the time.

"My dad was involved in Natal cricket as a coach and Robin was coming through as a young player.

"Because of the connection we used to practise in their net. Robin was a teenager then but obviously came over here and became a Hampshire legend.

"He was a brilliant sportsman, he still holds the shot-putt record at his school, which I know because it was also Shaun Pollock's school and he was always trying to beat Robin's record!"

Benkenstein's dad Martin played against Richards' Natal for Rhodesia in the early Seventies before becoming a close friend when the family emigrated.

"My dad played for Natal B and was part of the coaching for Natal when we moved over from Zim," he explains.

"We keep in touch with Barry. When he heard I was coming to Hampshire he said to give him a call if I wanted to know of any good pubs.

"I told him I was sure they'd all be closed down when he was here!"

Benkenstein went on to become a successful batsman himself, scoring 15,962 first-class runs at 44 and playing 23 one-day internationals for South Africa.

But Marshall was his biggest early influence. The late, great Hampshire all-rounder captained Natal during Benkenstein's first two first-class seasons alongside the like of Jonty Rhodes, Shaun Pollock and Neil Johnson, a future Hampshire all-rounder.

"I started my career with Malcolm Marshall pushing me to play when I came through at Natal and it was he

that advised Graham Ford that I should take over the captaincy at 22," he explains. "He played a huge role in my career."

Benkenstein acknowledges his career has come full circle as he begins a new chapter at Hampshire, whose main rivals this year will be Ford's Surrey.

"I obviously know Graham very well, he was my first coach at Natal and as one of the most experienced and successful coaches in the world, he knows what it takes to win," he continued.

DALE JOINS

Benkenstein following in the footsteps of county legends Marshall, Richards and Smith



'TALENTED KID': Dale Benkenstein, left, has high hopes for wicket-keeper batsman Adam Wheater, above

"He'll have done his homework at Surrey and they look pretty formidable on paper with Graeme Smith there for most of the season."

Kevin Pietersen, who played as an off-spinner under Benkenstein at Natal before seeking fame and fortune as an England batsman, initially at Nottinghamshire, will also be a significant threat to Hampshire's promotion chances when he returns from the Indian Premier League.

But Benkenstein's primary concern is Hampshire. He recognises similarities with Durham, who he captained

to the 2008 LV County Championship title before playing his part as new Hampshire signing Will Smith led the newest county to a successful defence.

"It's a great place to be; the guys really enjoy the job, they play the right way and they're successful and that fits in with how I like to play cricket," he said, during a break in Hampshire's pre-season photoshoot.

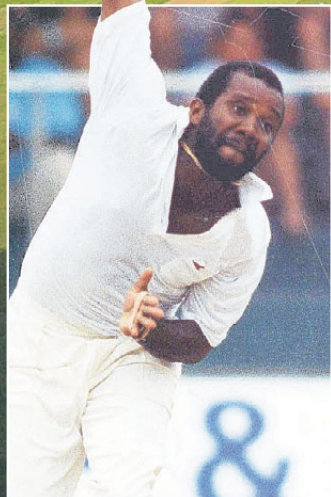
"There's a good balance here, they get on with each other socially which often helps when you get out on the field as you pull together for your mates.

YORKSHIRE HAVE WON MOST COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES - 31

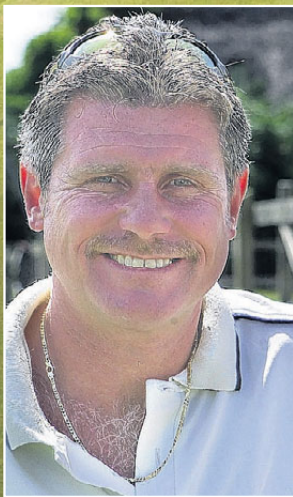
Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



THE DOTS...



MALCOLM MARSHALL



ROBIN SMITH



BARRY RICHARDS

"There's also been a lot of local talent come through system, mixed with overseas players, which has been the case with Durham.

"But the wicket and the weather conditions are poles apart!"

Benkenstein, who is living in Ocean Village, began his new role with Hampshire during last month's trip to Barbados.

"At the moment it's hard to judge and assess things, what counts is when the season starts," he says, aware that Hampshire struggled to take 20 wickets regularly for most of

last season.

"Our challenge will be to find a way of winning matches at home.

"There's been a lot of talk about bowling sides out here, that's a major concern and I think having Kyle Abbott arriving in a couple of weeks' time will definitely help with that.

"But it's also a mindset. You have to really believe and find a way of getting wickets.

"It's not about sticking to one game plan, you have to try and create things and that's something we can try and improve on."

Hampshire are hoping to have more life in their wickets this year, following last season's frustrations (five draws in nine home games). But Benkenstein is wary of blaming the conditions.

"The way you play on those surfaces is more important than the surface itself," he said. "Your best bowlers learn how to bowl on good wickets because Test wickets are generally pretty flat.

"So we don't want to dwell on the wicket. We got taught a bit of a lesson on Wednesday when we bowled [and

Middlesex made 377-5 declared] and everyone said 'this is the Ageas Bowl'.

"But then we were 204 all out. If you bowl well on any surface there's always something that causes batters problems.

"You can get your mind to a pretty negative state where you just think it's too flat. But certain bowlers will always be able to get something out of any wicket."

The additions of Abbott and Matt Coles have strengthened Hampshire's four-day attack considerably.

Tom Barber, a highly-promising young left-arm fast bowler from Dorset, has also impressed Benkenstein with his wicket-taking potential.

"He's improved with every game he's played," said Benkenstein, who knows a thing or two about talented home-grown fast bowlers, having played at Durham with the likes of Steve Harmison, Graham Onions and Ben Stokes.

"He's got the ingredients to be a good bowler, a lot of work is needed to put all those things together but he may play at a role at some point.

"It's our job to know when he's ready for that but mentally and skill wise he's not far off. If he performs well [in the 2nd XI] he'll be a contender, but throwing someone in early can result in a big step back."

'Pretty special'

Another new face has impressed. "Joe Gattling looks pretty special. Looking at his record he hasn't really put the numbers together that he should.

"Hampshire have produced some very good batters and there are a few in the team with a very good chance of playing for England.

"[James] Vince and [Liam] Dawson are very promising and learning how to score runs consistently and their aspirations are at the very top.

"Carbs is still in possession, Jimmy Adams is a quality player and Sean Terry looks very good.

"Then you've got the experience of Will Smith and Sean Ervine.

"Adam Wheeler's a talented kid and Matt Coles can be as explosive with the bat as he is with the ball.

"Abbott can also bat so there's real depth there."

All being well, Benkenstein will not be required to bat himself. But he was being considered for the captaincy of Hampshire's T20 side before deciding that it would be too much.

"I can understand why Jimmy doesn't want to do it, we respect that.

"There was talk when I was coming that I might captain the T20 side, I had a feeling I could still play having kept myself going playing some club cricket," he said. "But I can't see how I could do both jobs properly and I'd be keeping someone out who's got their career ahead of them."

The T20 captaincy has not been given to James Vince.

"Glenn Maxwell was an option, Carbs even," added Benkenstein.

"But James seems like a natural choice after being made vice-captain [of Hampshire's LV County Championship side]."

Smith is buzzing

WILL Smith has won four LV County Championship titles, but on the eve of his Hampshire debut he declared: "This is the most excited I've been about a county season."

Smith won a Championship medal with Notts in 2005 and three at Durham (2008, 2009, 2013), but he did not begin those campaigns with the optimism he has now, writes **SIMON WALTER**.

"It sounds a silly thing to say at 31, but I have a really good feeling we'll do well in all forms, but particularly four-day cricket," he says.

"There's a freshness about the squad that makes me think it's going to be a good year.

"We shouldn't just aim for promotion. Surrey are going to be impressive under Graham Ford and Graeme Smith, who, along with Andrew Strauss and Michael Clarke, is one of the best international captains there's been in recent years.

"But I believe we've got a better squad than anyone in the division and we should aim to win the league.

"We've definitely got a squad capable of doing that, it's probably one of the best I've

been involved in and that includes Championship-winning squads. "The skill level has really impressed me and everyone is motivated with drive to be successful."

Smith will effectively replace his former Durham teammate Neil McKenzie in Hampshire's Championship side but is also hoping to be a regular in the limited-overs formats.

"I would love to play every comp," he says. "I haven't played a huge amount of one-day cricket, which has been quite annoying because I feel I've got the game to add something to a one-day team.

"Hampshire's team will be tough to get into after the success they've had in the last few years, so I don't expect to walk straight in.

"But the way they play one-day cricket will suit me well."

Smith found form during pre-season, top scoring with 60 against a Middlesex attack including Steve Finn earlier this week.

"You just want to spend as many balls as you can at the crease, know your technique's still there and that you haven't lost it!" he said. "Fortunately everything seems to be in good working order."

Being reunited with Dale Benkenstein has also helped Smith settle in. He believes Hampshire have done very well to bring in his former Durham teammate as first-team coach.

"He's a good man, first and foremost. As a coach you want someone you admire and like. I've spent a lot of time with him on and off the field and all the players respect him for what he did in the game and the way he played the game.

"He'll see this as the perfect job for him.

"He'll be just right for the group of players we've got."



WILL SMITH

SURREY HAVE WON THE SECOND HIGHEST AMOUNT OF TITLES - 19

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight

Benk: Bowlers hold the key

HAMPSHIRE'S new first-team coach, Dale Benkenstein, has challenged his attack to believe they can bowl teams out at The Ageas Bowl, ahead of tomorrow's LV County Championship opener against Worcestershire.

Benkenstein has targeted a better home record as key to winning promotion.

Hampshire managed only two wins at the Ageas Bowl last season and will be hoping to repeat last April's success against Worcestershire over the next four days.

But they drew five of their other six home games and had to wait until their final match against Essex before they registered their next win, which was largely due to a ten-wicket haul for Matt Coles.

"Our challenge will be to find a way of winning matches at home," admits Benkenstein, pictured.

"There's been a lot of talk about bowling sides out here, that's a major concern and I think having Kyle Abbott arriving in a couple of weeks'



time will definitely help with that.

"But it's also a mindset. You have to really believe and find a way of getting wickets.

"It's not about sticking to one game plan, you have to try and create things and that's something we can try and improve on."

Hampshire are hoping to have more life in their wickets this year, following last season's frustrations.

But Benkenstein is wary of blaming the conditions.

"The way you play on those surfaces is more important than the surface itself," he said. "Your best bowlers learn how to bowl on good wickets because Test wickets are generally pretty flat.

"So we don't want to dwell on the wicket. We got taught a bit of a lesson on Wednesday when we bowled [and Middlesex made 377-5 declared] and everyone said 'this is the Ageas Bowl'.

"But then we were 204 all out. If you bowl well on any surface there's always something that causes batters problems."

New link-up for Hospital radio

SOUTHAMPTON Hospital Broadcasting Association [HBA] is collaborating with BBC Radio Solent for all LV County Championship cricket matches at The Ageas Bowl this season.

The HBA has provided ball-by-ball commentaries to hospital patients since 1967 and will join forces with Hampshire legend Kevan James, providing coverage on Radio Solent's AM and online output, while continuing its traditional full-day commentaries for those in hospital.

Ken Maxted, who co-ordinates HBA's band of commentators, said: "It is a real feather in our cap, any opportunity to extend awareness of the voluntary HBA beyond the boundary and confines of the hospital ward is a bonus."

EXCITING TIMES FOR HAMPSHIRE'S BABY BOOMERS

Hampshire's young squad is ripening into a fine vintage

Simon Walter

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CRICKET REPORTER



HAMPSHIRE are enjoying a baby boom off the field, but on it you sense this is the year a promotion-winning side will also be born.

Captain Jimmy Adams is dad to 11 week-old Jonah. James Tomlinson fathered a son last season. Will Smith's partner is expecting their second later this month and Danny Briggs and Joe Gattling will both be changing nappies come June.

"We'll be like Simon Katich when he was here; he always looked very excited before away trips because he'd be able to go straight to his hotel room and sleep!" laughs Adams, who is captain of a happy side in the second trimester of its development.

The likes of James Vince, Matt Coles, Adam Wheatley, Danny Briggs, Liam Dawson, Chris Wood and Michael Bates are all in the 23-24 age bracket, forming the nucleus of a squad that is still several years from its peak, one that can be successful for a long time to come.

No wonder Hampshire fans are pregnant with expectation.

The optimism at the county's pre-season press day this week was almost tangible and, dare I say it, reminiscent of the feel-good factor that came with Shane Warne's return as captain a decade ago, albeit without the fanfare.

On that occasion, there were ten times as many reporters at the

Ageas Bowl, where Warne's press conference saw him gush about Hampshire's other overseas player, a lad called Michael Clarke who we were told was Australia's best young batsman since Ricky Ponting.

Hampshire's biggest name at this year's photocall was more taciturn. Michael Carberry's decision not to talk was all that dampened the mood, at least amongst the local press.

Perhaps he was regretting his decision to effectively end his England career with his explosive, warts-and-all revelations in Tuesday's Guardian.

It was difficult not to sympathise with Carberry while he was surplus to requirements during the limited-overs leg of England's tour and even more so when reading the quotes elicited by Donald McRae.

Carberry's damning criticism of England's management, particularly limited-overs coach Ashley Giles, came across as a cathartic release of his pent-up frustration.

In direct contrast, Hampshire's new-look management team was the subject of high praise from Carberry's teammates on

Thursday afternoon.

These days, the first team is very much the baby of new coach Dale Benkenstein following his arrival and Giles White's more widespread responsibility as Director of Cricket.

A fresh outlook will bring new ideas and that can only be a good thing. But what differences will there be to Hampshire's team this year?

It is Hampshire's T20 XI, so successful for so long, where changes are most obvious. Neil McKenzie and Dimi Mascarenhas are a big loss but Hampshire's recruitment has been particularly shrewd this year and should compensate more than adequately.

Two quality all-rounders, Coles and Kyle Abbott, have replaced Mascarenhas and Sohail Tanvir, who disappointed as an overseas player last year.

Then there is the re-signing of Glenn Maxwell, who will return to the Ageas Bowl a global superstar next month.

Credit also for bestowing the T20 captaincy on the youngest candidate.

It will be fascinating to see how James Vince handles being

Mascarenhas's successor and Adams' vice-captain in the Championship and 50-over teams.

Vince only turned 23 last month so it is a brave move to give him the extra responsibility, but he will grow into the role so it is also the right one.

With Adams, Carberry, Will Smith and Sean Ervine alongside him, Vince will not be on his own.

Liam Dawson may also have been a captaincy contender, had he been less reluctant.

But he may have enough to concentrate on should he be promoted to No.4 to take on McKenzie's role as Hampshire's one-day 'finisher', with Smith providing depth to the batting.

Smith is also a very able replacement for McKenzie in the Championship side, which will probably see Vince move up to No.4 with the new man next in.

Carberry can now focus on opening the batting with Adams in the Championship and with Vince, whose England debut is surely not too far ahead of him, in the limited-overs formats.

Coles and Abbott could be just as electrifying a combination as Carberry and Vince when they share the new ball.

No doubt young Tom Barber will also play at some stage. It is always exciting when a teenage strike bowler comes on the scene and Barber cannot be too far away at the moment, with Abbott not expected until later this month, Chris Wood injured and conditions favouring an all-steam attack.

Personally, I am looking forward to seeing former Sussex batsman Joe Gattling play, even if

HAMPSHIRE LINE-UPS

When everyone is available, I expect these to be Hampshire's first-choice sides:

LVCC: Adams, Carberry, Dawson, Vince, Smith, Ervine, Wheatley, Coles, Abbott, Briggs/Balcombe, Tomlinson.

T20: Carberry, Vince, Adams, Maxwell, Ervine, Dawson, Wheatley, Coles, Abbott, Wood, Briggs.

50-over: Carberry, Vince, Adams, Dawson, Smith, Ervine, Wheatley, Coles, Abbott, Wood, Briggs.

DERBYSHIRE HAVE 'WON' MOST CHAMPIONSHIP WOODEN SPOONS - 15

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



KEY MAN: Michael Carberry will lead from the front in all formats for Hampshire.

it will make me feel considerably older (I confess to being a Brighton & Hove Albion fan who first saw his dad Steve play for the Seagulls in November 1989 – on Joe's second birthday).

Now 26, former Brighton striker Joe is by no means a youngster but he has made a good impression on Benkenstein during pre-season, most notably with a knock of 62 against his former Sussex teammates at Hove last week.

Given the quality of the additions, we should not be surprised that

Hampshire are favourites to win both limited-overs competitions; the new-look Natwest T20 Blast and

the Royal London One-Day Cup (the domestic competition is now a 50-over format for the first time since Hampshire won the 2009 Friends Provident Trophy).

There is no reason why Hampshire should not enjoy good runs to the knockout stages of each, both of which begin with a quarter-final round this year.

Anything can happen from there, but it is in the Championship that Hampshire look most well equipped for

improvement, which is why this should be the county's first promotion-winning campaign since that unforgettable first season under Warne in 2004.

That would be a fine way to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Hampshire's first game (the visit of Gloucestershire in July has been earmarked by Dave Allen, the club's honorary archivist, as the right time for the official sesquicentennial celebrations).

But in the meantime, Hampshire will be taking baby steps, starting with the first ball against Worcestershire tomorrow.

Dawson to come in at number 4?

From page 13

cricket, I'm not sure where I'll bat. If it's No 4, it's a big hole to fill but I would love to bat there – it's a much easier place to bat than No's 6 or 7.

"I'm not sure they know yet what they're going to do, we'll have to wait and see.

"I learnt a lot from Neil. I'm a similar sort of player but he was a genius at seeing us home. He wasn't a big hitter of the ball but was very clever and also gave himself time, which gave the team a chance to win the game.

"That's something I need to do better, being there at the end and remembering that there's always more time than you think."

Dawson is raring to go following his success of last season, when he passed 1,000 first-class runs for the first time and took more catches than any of his teammates.

"Having a good year makes you hungry for more so I've hit a lot of balls, bowled a lot and given myself the best chance to get off to a good start," he said.

"I'm very nervous about the season but the best way to calm the nerves is to go out and get some runs.

"I'm confident but there's the added pressure after doing well of people expecting the same this year.

"But I feel prepared after working harder than ever in the nets on my batting and my bowling so let's see what the season holds."

Dawson played in the Dhaka Premier League during the winter but also saw a lot of the Saints at St Mary's.

"I've been down quite a bit with Vincey and Woody, it was good to get away from cricket after a long season and to see Southampton do well has been good.

"Hopefully a few of them will get in the England squad and it'll be a good summer for them and for us."



KP set to feature in Lord's match

JAMES Vince benefited from the coaching of Mark Ramprakash and Graham Gooch over the winter.

The 23 year-old, pictured below, was with the England Performance Programme in Australia before Christmas and toured Sri Lanka with the England Lions in February.

He was dropped by the Lions after a top score of 18 from two matches against Sri Lanka Emerging Players in Colombo.

But he feels better for the experience, having netted against some of England's Ashes squad.

Vince said: "I didn't play many games but we had a good training camp before Christmas. It was pretty intense.

"Mark Ramprakash was the batting coach in Australia and in Sri Lanka he was joined by Graham Gooch for a couple of weeks.

"I talked to them about how they went about batting, particularly the mental approach as I feel pretty good about my technique.

"It was just good to practise in different conditions and in Australia it was good test in the nets against a few of the England guys not playing in the Tests; Tim Bresnan to start with and Boyd Rankin and Steve Finn.

"We also had quite a strong bowling attack with the likes of Tymal Mills and Jimmy Harris."



KP set to feature in Lord's match

KEVIN Pietersen has been confirmed for the Lord's bicentenary match between the MCC and a Rest of the World side in July.

The 33-year-old batsman, pictured, has a busy spring and summer itinerary ahead, having agreed deals with the Delhi Daredevils, Surrey and most recently the St Lucia Zouks in the Caribbean Premier League.

Now he will be part of a star-studded line-up for the celebratory match at Lord's, with Brett Lee and Muttiah Muralitharan also added to the list on Friday.

The MCC will be led by India legend Sachin Tendulkar, and also includes Lee, Rahul Dravid and England assistant coach Paul Collingwood.

Pietersen's former Hampshire skipper Shane Warne will captain the Rest of the World XI.

Pietersen said: "Shane Warne is a good friend of mine and I've enjoyed playing alongside him before so I'm sure it'll be great fun to do it again.

"Playing at Lord's is always very special and I'm looking forward to celebrating the 200th anniversary of what is a fantastic ground."



DERBYSHIRE'S ONLY CHAMPIONSHIP SUCCESS CAME BACK IN 1936

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



ZIMBABWEAN Neil Johnson was Hampshire's leading Championship runscore in their first season at what is now The Ageas Bowl in 2001.

Alan Mullally topped the wicket-taking lists, as Hampshire won promotion from the second tier at the first attempt.

Hampshire most runs (Champ)

NC Johnson	948
DA Kenway	840
GW White	731

Hampshire most wickets (Champ)

AD Mullally	57
AC Morris	51
SD Udall	49

Championship most runs

MEK Hussey (Northamptonshire)	2,055
DP Fulton (Kent)	1,729
MW Goodwin (Sussex)	1,521

Championship most wickets

RJ Kirtley (Sussex)	75
MP Bicknell (Surrey)	72
DE Malcolm (Leicestershire)	68

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Sussex	16	9	3	4	42	42	208
Hampshire	16	7	2	6	34	44	192
Warwickshire	16	5	1	10	46	40	185.75
Gloucestershire	16	5	5	6	46	43	173
Middlesex	16	4	3	9	46	42	172
Worcestershire	16	4	5	7	35	41	151.75
Nottinghamshire	16	3	7	6	44	38	141.25
Derbyshire	16	3	6	7	32	44	140
Derbyshire	16	1	9	6	20	37	92.25



NEIL Johnson, above, was Hampshire's leading Championship runscore as the county were relegated from the top tier for the second time in three seasons. **2002**

Hampshire most runs

NC Johnson	812
RA Smith	807
JP Crawley	806

Hampshire most wickets

SD Udall	50
AD Mullally	46
AD Mascarenhas/CT Tremlett	36

Championship most runs

IJ Ward (Surrey)	1,708
MJ Di Venuto (Derbyshire)	1,538
NV Knight (Warwickshire)	1,520

Championship most wickets

KJ Dean (Derbyshire)	80
MJ Saghers (Kent)	79
AJ Harris (Notts)/A Khan (Kent)	63

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Surrey	16	10	2	4	59	48	242.75
Warwickshire	16	7	2	7	42	44	198
Kent	16	7	4	5	48	44	195.5
Lancashire	16	6	4	6	33	43	172
Leicestershire	16	5	5	6	42	46	171
Sussex	16	3	6	7	43	47	154
Hampshire	16	2	5	9	35	44	131
Somerset	16	1	7	8	39	44	126.75
Yorkshire	16	2	8	6	35	45	124.75

Continued on facing page

CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION 1 COUNTY BY COUNTY GUIDE

DURHAM

Captain: Paul Collingwood
Head coach: Jon Lewis
Last season: Champions

Ins: Graham Clark (MCC Young Cricketers), John Hastings (after Indian Premier League), Stuart Poynter (Warwickshire)

Outs: Dale Benkenstein (retired), Ruel Brathwaite (Hampshire), Mitch Claydon (Kent), Steve Harmison (retired), Johann Myburgh (released), Callum Thorp (released), Will Smith (Hampshire)

Overseas player: John Hastings (Aus)

PROSPECTS: The consensus is that, cash-strapped and with a necessarily small squad, Durham will be up against it to defend their title.

The loss of evergreen Dale Benkenstein, who has become Hampshire's coach, is a further blow – as is Ben Stokes' self-inflicted injury.

Collingwood may well have his distractions too, depending on his status in the England coaching set-up, but has made no secret of his commitment to Durham this season. Continued competitiveness in all formats will nonetheless constitute a successful campaign, in the circumstances.

LANCASHIRE

Captain: Glen Chapple
Head coach: Peter Moores
Last season: Division Two champions, promoted

Ins: Jos Buttler (Somerset), Liam Livingstone (Youth)

Outs: Gareth Cross (released), Stephen Moore (Derbyshire), Simon Katich

Overseas player: None

PROSPECTS: Lancashire are another team who could yet be significantly affected by England's fortunes – conceivably in the case of coach Peter Moores, more obviously for new wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler and his Test aspirations.

Veteran captain Chapple will do well to oversee a season of consolidation.

MIDDLESEX

Captain: Neil Dexter
Head coach: Richard Scott
Last season: 5th

Ins: Steve Eskinazi (Youth), Harry Podmore
Outs: Corey Collymore (released), Josh Davey (released), Adam London (released), Tom Smith (Gloucestershire)

Overseas player: Chris Rogers (Aus)

PROSPECTS: England calls could hit the Londoners too, with opener Sam Robson on a likely short-list.

In Chris Rogers, though, they have a surefire source of stability anyway at the top of the order – and given Steven Finn's difficult winter, they are sure to see much more of him than in recent summers. If he can click again, Middlesex could well push for honours.

NORTHANTS

Captain: Stephen Peters
Head coach: David Ripley
Last season: Division Two runners-up, promoted

Ins: Maurice Chambers (Essex), Graeme White (Nottinghamshire)

Outs: Lee Daggett (released), Christian Davis (released), Con de Lange (released), Luke Evans (released), Sam Sweeney (released)

Overseas: Richard Levi (SA), Jackson Bird (Aus)

THERE'S ALL



DISTRACTED: Paul Collingwood may have his mind on England duties instead of Durham's title defence.

PROSPECTS: After their unexpectedly successful 2013, this may be a tough follow-up season.

Northamptonshire have, however, in Bird recruited what looks a perfect replacement for Trent Copeland – and Levi will be a major short-form weapon.

Alex Wakely's injury is a setback, but Steven

Crook and David Willey still headline a group of energetic and talented cricketers.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

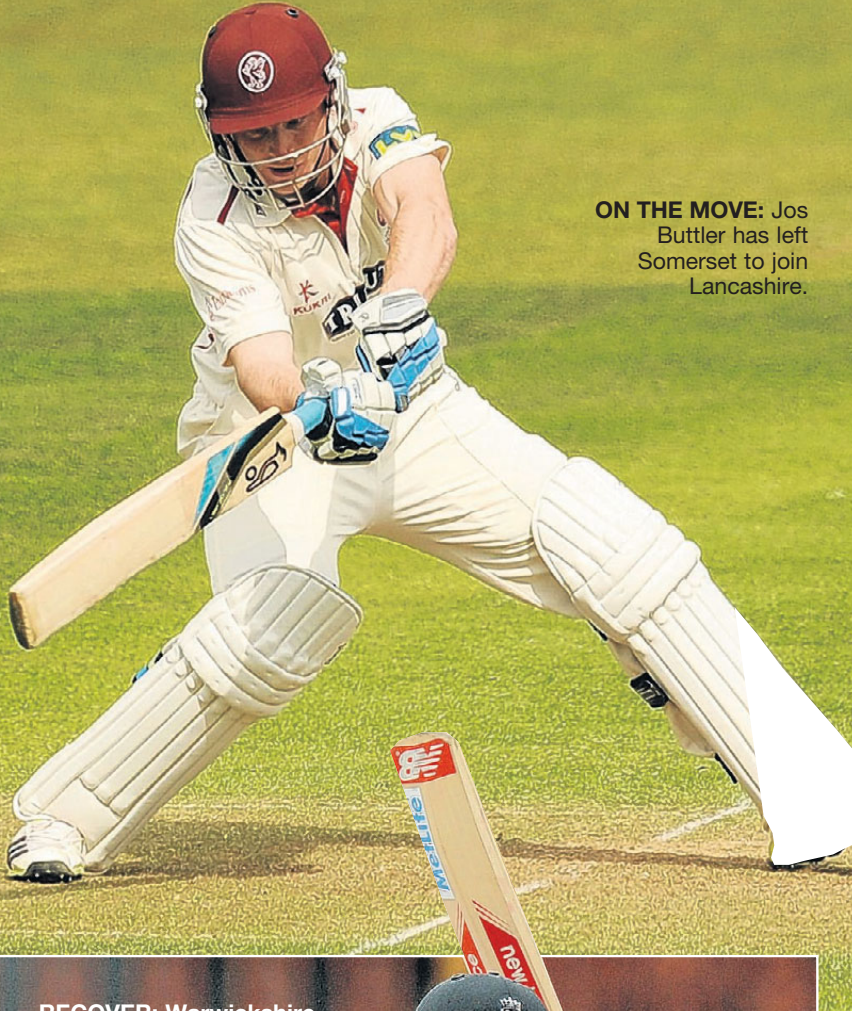
Captain: Chris Read
Head coach: Mick Newell

HAMPSHIRE'S TWO CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES CAME IN 1961 AND 1973

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



TO PLAY FOR



ON THE MOVE: Jos Buttler has left Somerset to join Lancashire.

RECOVER: Warwickshire could benefit from Jonathan Trott's early departure from the winter's Ashes tour.



Last season: 7th

Ins: Phil Jaques (Yorkshire), Gary Keedy (Surrey)
Outs: Ben Phillips (released), Graeme Swann (retired), Graeme White (Northamptonshire)

Overseas player: Peter Siddle (Aus)

PROSPECTS: Siddle is, arguably, the best of all

year's county signings.

Tireless, durable and aggressive, the Australia Ashes-winning seamer seems sure to create regular winning opportunities at Trent Bridge and elsewhere.

Jaques should be a safe bet, and Keedy may well have one more big season in him.

Nottinghamshire really ought to fare much better

than they did last summer at least in four-day cricket, and have the firepower to defend their one-day title too in the 50-over format.

SOMERSET

Captain: Marcus Trescothick
Head coach: Dave Nosworthy
Last season: 6th

In: Johann Myburgh (Durham)

Outs: Jos Buttler (Lancashire), Gemaal Hussain (released)

Overseas player: Alviro Petersen (SA)

PROSPECTS: Trescothick's batting form may be key, but there is little reason to doubt he retains the appetite and would dearly love some overdue success for a county which has so often come close.

Petersen will churn out the four-day runs; Craig Kieswetter must repay the faith with bat and gloves, and the Overton twins will be out to catch the eye again.

SUSSEX

Captain: Ed Joyce
Head coach: Mark Robinson
Last season: 3rd

Ins: Yasir Arafat (Somerset), Jon Lewis (Surrey), Steffan Piolet (Warwickshire)

Outs: Joe Gattling (Hampshire), Andrew Miller (released), Monty Panesar (Essex)

Overseas players: Steve Magoffin (Aus), Yasir Arafat (Pak)

PROSPECTS: Sussex are perennially reliable - and under astute management in Robinson and Joyce, are among the likeliest to be battling for four-day silverware. Matt Prior and Chris Jordan may eventually be lost to England - but if so, they will have given their county a leg-up first.

WARWICKSHIRE

Captain: Jim Troughton
Head coach: Dougie Brown
Last season: 4th

Ins: Richard Jones (Worcestershire), Tom Lewis (Youth), Jon Webb (Youth)
Outs: Tom Allin (released), Darren Maddy (retired), Chris Metters (released), Steffan Piolet (Sussex), Stuart Poynter (Durham)

Overseas players: Shoaib Malik (Pak), Jeetan Patel (NZ)

PROSPECTS: Troughton will be out until late May at least, following back surgery, but Warwickshire still look likely to fare at least as well as last year.

The early-season availability of Jonathan Trott, and Ian Bell, should account for lots of runs - and Chris Woakes appears to have improved again with bat and ball through the winter.

YORKSHIRE

Captain: Andrew Gale
Head coach: Jason Gillespie
Last season: 2nd

Ins: Ben Coad (Youth), Aaron Finch, Will Rhodes (Youth), Oliver Robinson (Youth), Jonathan Tattersall (Youth)

Outs: Callum Geldart (released), Phil Jaques (Nottinghamshire), Joe Sayers (retired), Iain Wardlaw (released)

Overseas player: Aaron Finch (Aus)

PROSPECTS: Durham's late surge was too much for the White Rose last season. Yorkshire will nonetheless, and probably with good reason, start as favourites with most to stay the course this time.

Twenty20 signing Finch looks, alongside compatriot Siddle for Nottinghamshire, the best of the 2014 overseas acquisitions.

SIMON Katich starred in his first spell with Hampshire, but the county still finished second bottom of the second tier of the Championship in 2003.

Hampshire most runs

SM Katich1,143
JP Crawley878
N Pothas809

Hampshire most wickets

AD Mascarenhas39
SD Udal34
CT Tremlett27

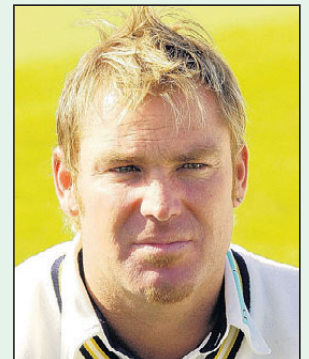
Championship most runs

SG Law (Lancashire)1,820
MEK Hussey (Northamptonshire) 1,697
MJ Di Venuto (Derbyshire)1,520

Championship most wickets

Mushtaq Ahmed (Sussex)103
MS Kaspruwicz (Glamorgan)77
J Lewis (Gloucestershire)74

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Worcestershire	16	10	1	5	42	44	245.75
Northants	16	10	2	4	45	44	237
Gloucestershire	16	5	2	9	38	46	190
Yorkshire	16	4	5	7	54	47	183.5
Glamorgan	16	5	5	6	45	45	183
Durham	16	5	7	4	31	43	159.25
Somerset	16	4	8	4	41	44	157
Hampshire	16	2	6	8	36	44	140
Derbyshire	16	2	11	3	30	44	114



SHANE Warne, above, skipped Hampshire to promotion in the Championship in his first season in charge in 2004

Hampshire most runs

JP Crawley938
MJ Brown838
N Pothas834

Hampshire most wickets

AD Mascarenhas56
SK Warne51
CT Tremlett and SD Udal39

Championship most runs

BJ Hodge (Leicestershire)1,548
IR Bell (Warwickshire)1,498
MR Ramprakash (Surrey)1,451

Championship most wickets

Mushtaq Ahmed (Sussex)82
G Keedy (Lancashire)72
Danish Kaneria (Essex)63

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Notts	16	9	2	5	66	40	252
Hampshire	16	9	2	5	42	40	228
Glamorgan	16	5	2	9	48	44	196.5
Somerset	16	4	5	7	47	44	175
Essex	16	3	6	7	50	45	165
Leicestershire	16	4	5	7	39	42	163.5
Yorkshire	16	3	4	9	44	40	162
Derbyshire	16	1	6	9	36	40	126
Durham	16	2	8	6	28	41	118.5

Continued on page 20

SOMERSET, NORTHANTS AND GLOUCS HAVE NEVER WON THE TITLE

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight

FOR the second season running, Hampshire finished runners-up to Nottinghamshire – this time in the top flight.

Though Shane Warne started the season as captain, Shaun Udal took over once The Ashes began.

Hampshire most runs

JP Crawley	1,246
N Pothas	973
SM Ervine	821

Hampshire most wickets

SK Warne	47
CT Tremlett	46
SD Udal	44

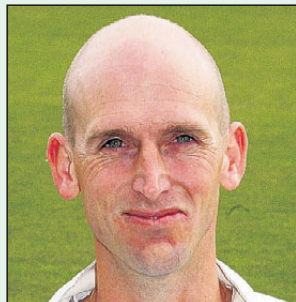
Championship most runs

EC Joyce (Middlesex)	1,668
OA Shah (Middlesex)	1,650
MR Ramprakash (Surrey)	1,568

Championship most wickets

Mushtaq Ahmed (Sussex)	80
GJ Kruis (Yorkshire)	64
JM Anderson (Lancashire)	60

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Nottinghamshire	16	9	3	4	50	44	236
Hampshire	16	9	3	4	46	46	233
Sussex	16	7	3	6	57	45	224
Warwickshire	16	8	5	3	42	44	209.5
Kent	16	6	3	7	56	43	202.5
Middlesex	16	4	5	7	56	42	181.5
Surrey	16	4	3	9	53	44	180.5
Gloucestershire	16	1	10	5	26	46	104
Glamorgan	16	1	14	1	33	38	88.5



JOHN Crawley, above, scored over 1,700 Championship runs as Hampshire enjoyed another good season in the top flight in 2006, finishing fourth.

Hampshire most runs

JP Crawley	1,737
JHK Adams	1,162
N Pothas	973

Hampshire most wickets

SK Warne	58
AD Mascarenhas	43
JTA Bruce	38

Championship most runs

MR Ramprakash (Surrey)	2,211
HD Ackerman (Leicestershire)	1,804
JP Crawley (Hampshire)	1,737

Championship most wickets

Mushtaq Ahmed (Sussex)	102
Z Khan (Worcestershire)	78
CM Willoughby (Somerset)/ RDB Croft (Glamorgan)	66

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Sussex	16	9	2	5	49	47	242
Lancashire	16	6	1	9	58	46	224
Hampshire	16	6	3	7	49	48	207
Warwickshire	16	6	5	5	42	43	189
Kent	16	4	4	8	43	44	175
Yorkshire	16	3	6	7	43	41	154
Durham	16	4	8	4	39	43	153.5
Notts	16	4	7	5	40	37	153
Middlesex	16	1	7	8	47	42	133.5

Continued on facing page

BIG NAMES SET TO

COUNTY BY COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION 2 GUIDE

DERBYSHIRE

Captain: Wayne Madsen

Head coach: Graeme Welch

Last season: 8th in Division One, relegated

Ins: Greg Cork (Youth), Ben Cotton (Youth), Scott Elstone (Nottinghamshire), Stephen Moore (Lancashire), Tom Taylor (Youth)

Outs: Alasdair Evans (released), Dan Redfern (Leicestershire)

Overseas player: Shivnarine Chanderpaul (WI)

PROSPECTS: The productivity of Madsen and Chanderpaul will be highly significant, although Moore may prove a clever signing if he can rediscover his

previously-proven run-scoring knack. Derbyshire will be out to continue their recent yo-yo experiences, and have prospects of doing so if they can avoid the false start they endured last season.

ESSEX

Captain: James Foster

Head coach: Paul Grayson

Last season: 3rd

Ins: Rehan Hassan (Youth), Monty Panesar (Sussex)

Outs: Maurice Chambers (Northamptonshire), Matt Walker

Overseas player: Rob Quiney (Aus)

PROSPECTS: Essex too got off to a miserable start last time round, but finished strongly.

More consistency is obviously very much required from a squad with the collective talent to beat the best if they get their act together.

Alastair Cook's early availability may help kickstart a more solid season, while Panesar's presence is a random factor which could go either way.

GLAMORGAN

Captain: Mark Wallace

Head coach: Toby Radford

Last season: 8th

Ins: Jacques Rudolph

Out: Simon Jones (released)

Overseas players: Rudolph

Prospects: Rudolph will be a big help across the formats for contenders who reached a Lord's final last year and are surely also capable of better than 17th in the championship.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Captain: Michael Klinger

Head coach: John Bracewell

Last season: 6th

Ins: Tom Smith (Middlesex), Will Tavare (Youth)

Outs: Richard Coughtrie (released), Richard Dawson, Paul Muchall (released), Ed Young (released)



NEW SIGNING: Monty Panesar.

Benkenstein's new career is an intriguing one, and starts at an apparently transitional time for all

STELLAR NAME: Ex-Hampshire ace Kevin Pietersen

Overseas players: Michael Klinger (Aus), Dan Christian (Aus)

PROSPECTS: Like neighbours Glamorgan, they have enlisted pragmatic overseas input as 'captain Klinger' returns and Christian supplies the short-format beef. Others will need to step up too, though.

HAMPSHIRE

Captain: Jimmy Adams

Head coach: Dale Benkenstein

Last season: 4th

Ins: Kyle Abbott, Tom Barber (Youth), Ruel Brathwaite (Durham), Matt Coles (Kent), Joe Gattling (Sussex), Will Smith

Overseas player: Kyle Abbott (SA)

PROSPECTS: Benkenstein's new career is an intriguing one, and starts at an apparently transitional time for all. Abbott is an imaginative and very possibly canny signing.

In Michael Bates, Hampshire unquestionably have the best wicketkeeper in the country - but one they rarely pick, because he has less to offer in front of the stumps.

In Coles, they have acquired mercurial skill and



HANTS HAVE FINISHED BOTTOM OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP FIVE TIMES

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight

STAR IN DIVISION 2



STELLAR NAME:
Graeme Smith will
be playing for
Surrey in 2014

unrealised potential. Benkenstein's initial task is to quickly assess all the ingredients, and place them in order.

KENT

Captain: Rob Key
Head coach: Jimmy Adams
Last season: 7th

Ins: Mitch Claydon (Durham), David Griffiths (Hampshire, right), Calum Haggett (Somerset)

Outs: Matt Coles (Hampshire), Ben Kemp (released), Azhar Mahmood (released), Mike Powell (released), Charlie Shreck (Leicestershire)

Overseas player: Doug Bollinger (Aus)

PROSPECTS: 2014 is set to be a telling summer for a

clutch of promising cricketers at Canterbury, all in need of a breakthrough season.

Daniel Bell-Drummond and Sam Northeast still have much time on their side - while at the other end of the age scale, Darren Stevens' availability will be heartening for all after he was cleared of any wrongdoing in the Bangladesh Premier League.

LEICESTERSHIRE

Captain: Ramnaresh Sarwan
Head coach: Ben Smith
Last season: 9th (bottom)

Ins: Dan Redfern (Derbyshire), Charlie Shreck (Kent)

Outs: Claude Henderson (retired), Matthew Hoggard (retired), Robbie Williams (released)

Overseas player: Ramnaresh Sarwan (WI)

PROSPECTS: Once notable over-achievers, Leicestershire hit rock bottom last summer.

Henderson and Hoggard's retirements are watershed events, while the apparent ongoing uncertainty over when Shiv Thakor will return after his finger operations is no help.

Leicestershire badly need to retain and nurture his talents, after the departures of home-grown rising stars such as James Taylor and Stuart Broad in relatively recent times.

SURREY

Captain: Graeme Smith
Head coach: Graham Ford
Last season: Bottom of Division One, relegated

In: None

Outs: Zander de Bruyn (released), Gary Keedy (Nottinghamshire), Jon Lewis (Sussex)

Overseas player: Graeme Smith (SA)

PROSPECTS: It really should be bull's eye this year for 2013's loose cannons.

Even allowing for the unpredictability of Kevin Pietersen, his availability and that of Smith make Surrey more than ever heavyweights - especially in the wrong division.

The best guess is that Ford brings a steadying hand to a largely southern African formula which ought to be too good for most opponents.

WORCESTERSHIRE

Captain: Daryl Mitchell
Head coach: Steve Rhodes
Last season: 5th

Ins: Ed Barnard (Youth), Joe Clarke (Youth)

Outs: Michael Johnson (released), Richard Jones (Warwickshire), Aneesh Kapil (released), Steve Leach (released), David Lucas (retired), Alan Richardson (retired)

Overseas player: Saeed Ajmal (Pak)

PROSPECTS: While Surrey apparently scour the hemispheres, as well as south London, Worcestershire rarely cast their net far past the Severn.

Long-term employees Alex Kervezee (Namibia) and Ajmal (Faisalabad) are the only glaring exceptions - unless you count seam bowler Chris Russell (Isle of Wight).

Worcestershire's management team, largely assembled in Bradford, will do well to keep the team competitive again - especially after the retirement of key bowler Alan Richardson.

Compiled by David Clough, Press Association Sport

MICHAEL Brown scored over 1,000 Championship runs for the only time in his Hampshire career in 2007, with Shane Warne taking 50 wickets in his last season with the county.

Hampshire most runs

MJ Brown1,078
MA Carberry1,067
JP Crawley866

Hampshire most wickets

SK Warne50
JTA Bruce39
SR Clark24

Championship most runs

MR Ramprakash (Surrey)2,026
DJG Sales (Northamptonshire)1,384
MJ Di Venuto (Durham)1,329

Championship most wickets

Mushtaq Ahmed (Sussex)90
OD Gibson (Durham)80
Danish Kaneria (Essex)74

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Sussex	16	7	3	5	37	43	202
Durham	16	7	5	4	38	47	197.5
Lancashire	16	5	2	8	40	44	190
Surrey	16	5	4	6	41	40	178
Hampshire	16	5	3	8	32	43	177
Yorkshire	16	4	4	8	49	38	175
Kent	16	3	5	7	43	36	153
Warwickshire	16	2	5	9	40	35	139
Worcestershire	16	1	8	5	18	35	95



JAMES Tomlinson, above, finished the 2008 summer as the leading wicket-taker in either division of the Championship with 67 victims.

Hampshire most runs

N Pothas963
MJ Brown940
MJ Lumb818

Hampshire most wickets

JA Tomlinson67
Imran Tahir44
AD Mascarenhas41

Championship most runs

MW Goodwin (Sussex)1,343
HD Ackerman (Leicestershire)1,302
JA Rudolph (Yorkshire)1,292

Championship most wickets

JA Tomlinson (Hampshire)67
TJ Murtagh (Middlesex)64
AU Rashid (Yorkshire)62

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Durham	16	6	3	6	37	41	190
Nottinghamshire	16	5	3	7	37	43	182
Hampshire	16	5	4	7	33	47	178
Somerset	16	3	2	11	44	44	174
Lancashire	16	5	2	8	24	40	170
Sussex	16	2	2	12	45	38	159
Yorkshire	16	2	5	9	50	45	159
Kent	16	4	6	6	30	44	154
Surrey	16	0	5	10	45	36	124

Continued on page 22

DURHAM WERE THE LAST TEAM TO JOIN THE CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1992

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



IMRAN Tahir took over 50 Championship wickets in his first full season with Hampshire in 2009.

Hampshire most runs

JHK Adams	1,279
MA Carberry	1,251
MJ Lumb	834

Hampshire most wickets

Imran Tahir	52
JA Tomlinson	30
DA Griffiths	28

Championship most runs

ME Trescothick (Somerset)	1,817
MJ Di Venuto (Durham)	1,601
M van Jaarsveld (Kent)	1,475

Championship most wickets

Danish Kaneria (Essex)	75
JC Tredwell (Kent)	69
SP Kirby (Gloucestershire)	64

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Durham	16	8	0	8	49	48	240
Nottinghamshire	16	4	2	10	56	41	193
Somerset	16	3	1	12	50	43	182
Lancashire	16	4	2	10	35	44	175
Warwickshire	16	3	3	10	54	38	174
Hampshire	16	3	3	10	50	40	169
Yorkshire	16	2	2	12	46	44	166
Sussex	16	2	6	8	45	39	143
Worcestershire	16	0	10	6	30	40	94



JIMMY Adams, above, and Michael Carberry both scored over 1,000 runs, but Hampshire only just avoided relegation from the top flight of the Championship in 2010.

Hampshire most runs

JHK Adams	1,351
MA Carberry	1,221
SM Ervine	944

Hampshire most wickets

JA Tomlinson	46
DG Cork	45
DR Briggs	32

Championship most runs

MR Ramprakash (Surrey)	1,595
A Lyth (Yorkshire)	1,509
JC Hildreth (Somerset)	1,440

Championship most wickets

AR Adams (Nottinghamshire)	68
GM Hussain (Gloucestershire)	67
JAR Harris (Glamorgan)	63

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Nottinghamshire	16	7	5	4	47	43	214
Somerset	16	6	2	8	53	41	214
Yorkshire	16	6	2	8	41	42	203
Lancashire	16	5	3	8	35	43	182
Durham	16	5	3	8	30	39	173
Warwickshire	16	6	9	1	20	47	166
Hampshire	16	3	6	7	47	41	157
Kent	16	3	7	6	42	44	151
Essex	16	2	6	8	29	43	126

Continued on facing page

COUNTY CRICKET'S

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SPORTS EDITOR



THE times they are a changing in English county cricket this year.

While the Championship remains the same, there is a new look to the t20 competition and a new format to the limited overs cup competition which has undergone several revamps in recent times.

Here, *The Sports Pink* looks back at other seasons in Hampshire's history, going back in ten-yearly intervals from today, and the competitions that have been and gone.

1964

Hampshire won just five of their 28 three-day County Championship games, finishing fifth bottom of the then 17 county league.

The only one-day competition was the 60-over Gillette Cup.

Hampshire stroll through the first round, beating Minor County Wiltshire at Chippenham after bowling the hosts out for just 81, Bob Cottam taking 4-9 off 10 overs.

Hampshire are thrashed in the second round at Edgbaston, though.

John Jameson scores an undefeated 100 as Warwickshire post 307-8, before Hampshire are all out for 129 to lose by 178 runs in what was only the second season of the first limited overs competition in this country.

1974

Hampshire finish second in the Championship, which is now played over 20 three-day games.

It was not a vintage summer for their batsmen, with only the legendary Barry Richards (1,069) reaching the four-figure runs milestone.

West Indian fast bowler Andy Roberts was the star performer, bagging 111 wickets.

Bob Herman claimed 70 and Mike Taylor weighed in with 63.

Herman (24) was Hampshire's top wicket-taker when they finish joint fourth in the John Player Sunday League.

The JPL was a 16-game 40 overs a side tournament of running the length of the county season which started in the late 1960s, where each of the 17 counties played each other once.

Gordon Greenidge was Hampshire's leading runscore with 432.

There was another second round exit for Hampshire in the Gillette Cup.

After thrashing Derbyshire by nine wickets in the first round – Herman and Taylor both taking three wickets – Hampshire lost in the next round at Yorkshire.

By now, there was a third one-day competition, the Benson & Hedges Cup having come into being in 1972.

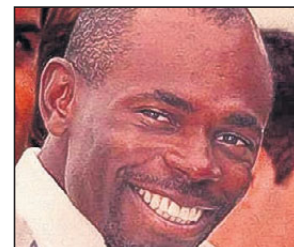
The top two from each of the four qualifying groups went through to the knockout quarter finals, with ties played over 55 overs a side.

Hampshire won all four of their group games, with Barry Richards scoring 129 against Gloucestershire, 93 against the Minor Counties – who were skittled for 99 (Andy Roberts 4-24) and 67 against Glamorgan.

Drawn away to Somerset in the quarter finals – Hampshire had already won a group game at Taunton – the visitors recovered from 22-4 to post 182 (Trevor Jesty 79).

Hampshire were on the verge of victory with Somerset 113-8, only for the then 18-year-old Ian Botham to come in at No 9 and write the first chapter in his incredible cricketing story.

Botham recovered from being hit in the mouth by Roberts to end with an unbeaten 45, putting



FAMILIAR FACES: Andy Roberts, Mark Nicholas and Cardigan Connor.

on 63 for the ninth wicket with Hallam Moseley (24) as Somerset eventually won by one wicket with six balls left.

1984

Minus Gordon Greenidge and Malcolm Marshall – on a tour of England with the all-conquering West Indies – other names came to the fore for the county.

Five players scored over 1,000 runs as Hampshire finished third bottom of the Championship, which consisted of 24 three-day games.

Mark Nicholas (1,453) led the way from Trevor Jesty (1,329), Chris Smith (1,112), Paul Terry

(1,055) and Nigel Cowley (1,020).

Cowley (52) was one of three men to take over 50 Championship wickets – Tim Tremlett (67) and Cardigan Connor (60) the others.

Hampshire finished mid-table in the John Player Sunday League, with Nicholas (558) and Connor (20) top runscore and wicket-taker respectively.

The 60-over limited overs cup was by now known as the NatWest Trophy, and again Hampshire suffered a second round thrashing.

After beating Norfolk in round one, they were dismissed for just 99 to lose by 151 runs to Kent at the County Ground in Southampton, Terry Alderman bagging 4-21.

Hampshire failed to progress beyond the group

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight

A NEW BALL GAME

The changing face of the domestic cricket scene...

ON THE MIC: Hampshire great Barry Richards.



STAR NAMES: Shaun Udal, Robin Smith and John Crawley.

stage of the Benson & Hedges Cup, the highlight being a 106-run thrashing of Surrey at The Oval. Steve Andrew (3-17) and Paul Reifer (3-19) shared six wickets as Surrey were dismissed for 117.

1994

By now, the Championship consisted of 17 four day games – one against every other county.

Hampshire only managed four wins all season and finished lower mid table.

Three players managed over 1,000 runs – Robin Smith (1,143), Mark Nicholas (1,115) and

Paul Terry (1,056) while Cardigan Connor (67) and Shaun Udal (60) were the top wicket-takers.

John Player's sponsorship of the 40-over league had ended in 1986, with Refuge Assurance taking over.

In 1991, Somerset hosted Lancashire in the first 40-over league game NOT to be played on a Sunday.

In 1993, Axa Equity & Law became sponsors and in the first season games were played over 50 overs with coloured clothing and white balls.

For 1994, games reverted back to 40 overs a side but matches could still take place on any day of the week.

Hampshire finished 12th out of 17.

There were two great centuries scored in successive games towards the end of August.

First, Robin Smith struck an unbeaten 110 in Southampton as Hampshire chased 262 to beat Surrey.

A week later, Hampshire set Durham – then in only their second season as a first class county – 218 to win at US Portsmouth.

With Wayne Larkins blasting an undefeated 131, Durham romped to a ten-wicket success.

Hampshire's interest in the NatWest Trophy did not last long.

After whipping Cambridgeshire by nine wickets, the county were knocked out by Kent.

The county enjoyed better fortunes in the Benson & Hedges Cup, which by now had abandoned the group stage phase.

Hampshire defeated Yorkshire in the first round before Robin Smith's unbeaten 73 rushed them to a nine wicket quarter final win at Essex in game reduced to 19 overs due to bad weather.

Smith cracked 108 as Hampshire post 244-6 against Worcestershire in the semi finals, only to lose by three wickets.

The Benson & Hedges Cup eventually disappeared from the cricket fixture list at the end of the 2002 summer.

2004

By now, the fixture list showed numerous changes.

From 2000, the Championship had been split into two divisions, with each county playing 16 four day games – one game fewer than a decade earlier.

There was no Benson & Hedges Cup, but instead a new kid on the block – the brash twenty20 Cup getting its second outing – and the NatWest Trophy had also disappeared.

In addition, the one-day league was now played over 45 overs again!

Hampshire had been included in the first Championship top flight, but suffered relegation in the first year.

Going straight back up in 2001, they went back down in 2003.

In 2004, continuing the yo-yo existence, they won promotion again in Shane Warne's first season as captain.

Warne (51) was one of five players to take over 30 second tier wickets – Dimi Mascarenhas (56), Shaun Udal (39), Chris Tremlett (39) and Billy Taylor (33) the others.

No batsman reached 1,000 runs, but John Crawley was closest with 938 – helped by his unbeaten 301 against champions Nottinghamshire.

Current Australian Test skipper Michael Clarke was experiencing his first – and so far only – taste of English county cricket. He didn't start well but compiled three successive hundreds prior to ending his season early due to international commitments.

The 60-over NatWest Trophy had gone, replaced by the 50-over Cheltenham & Gloucester Trophy.

Hampshire eased past Cheshire at leafy Alderley Edge in the second round – Warne using ten bowlers in the process, everyone bar wicket-keeper Nic Pothas – before losing in the next round at Gloucestershire.

The one day league was by now called the Totesport League, with games 45 overs a side and teams split into two divisions.

Hampshire finished third in the top flight, with Pothas (395) and Mascarenhas (308) providing lower order runs.

Warne and Alan Mullally both took 18 wickets.

Hampshire progressed beyond the group stage of the t20 for the first time.

After losing their first two games, they ended runners-up by winning the next three.

Continued on page 32

NEIL McKenzie scored over 1,000 Championship runs, but Hampshire endured a miserable 2011 campaign and finished bottom of the top flight.

Hampshire most runs

ND McKenzie	1,120
JHK Adams	935
LA Dawson	908

Hampshire most wickets

DR Briggs	38
Imran Tahir	28
CP Wood	24

Championship most runs

ME Trescottick (Somerset)	1,673
Z de Bruyn (Surrey)	1,383
MW Goodwin (Sussex)	1,372

Championship most wickets

DD Masters (Essex)	93
TJ Murtagh (Middlesex)	80
TE Linley (Surrey) and A Richardson (Worcestershire)	73

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Lancashire	16	10	4	2	37	44	246
Warwickshire	16	9	4	3	46	45	235
Durham	16	8	4	4	47	45	232
Somerset	16	6	7	3	45	39	189
Sussex	16	6	6	4	34	40	182
Nottinghamshire	16	5	6	5	35	43	173
Worcestershire	16	4	11	1	31	44	142
Yorkshire	16	3	6	7	34	37	138
Hampshire	16	3	6	7	30	36	127



DAVID Balcombe, above, enjoyed his best ever season with the ball for Hampshire in 2012, taking 59 wickets as the county finished fourth in their first second tier campaign since 2004.

Hampshire most runs

JHK Adams	987
SM Katich	738
SM Ervine	696

Hampshire most wickets

DJ Balcombe	59
JA Tomlinson	43
SM Ervine	26

Championship most runs

NRD Compton (Somerset)	1,191
CJL Rogers (Middlesex)	1,086
V Chopra (Warwickshire)	1,028

Championship most wickets

G Onions (Durham)	64
CJC Wright (Warwickshire)	62
TS Roland-Jones (Middlesex)	61

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Derbyshire	16	6	2	8	31	43	194
Yorkshire	16	5	0	11	41	40	194
Kent	16	4	3	9	39	40	170
Hampshire	16	4	5	7	28	40	153
Essex	16	3	3	10	27	40	145
Glamorgan	16	3	6	6	28	35	131
Leicestershire	16	3	3	10	24	33	130
Northants	16	2	5	9	37	34	130
Gloucestershire	16	3	6	6	22	35	126

Continued on page 33

HAMPSHIRE FIXTURES

April

6 Worcestershire (CC) .Ageas Bowl
 13 Gloucestershire (CC)Bristol
 20 Derbyshire (CC)Derby
 27 Surrey (CC)Ageas Bowl

May

5 Cardiff MCCU (Uni) . .Ageas Bowl
 11 Glamorgan (CC)Ageas Bowl
 16 Glamorgan (T20) . . .Ageas Bowl
 18 Leicestershire (CC) . . .Leicester
 23 Sussex (T20)Hove
 25 Middlesex (T20)Northwood
 30 Essex (T20)Ageas Bowl

June

1 Derbyshire (CC)Ageas Bowl
 5 Kent (T20)Ageas Bowl
 8 Worcestershire (T20) . .New Road
 13 Somerset (T20)Taunton
 15 Essex (CC)Ageas Bowl
 20 Gloucs (T20)Ageas Bowl
 25 Glamorgan (T20)Cardiff
 27 Surrey (T20)Oval
 28 Surrey (CC)Oval

July

4 Kent (T20)Canterbury
 6 Somerset (T20)Ageas Bowl
 7 Gloucs (CC)Ageas Bowl
 11 Middlesex (T20)Ageas Bowl
 13 Essex (CC)Colchester
 18 Sussex (T20)Ageas Bowl
 22 Essex (T20)Chelmsford
 26 Derbyshire (RLC)Derby
 27 Lancashire (RLC) . . .Old Trafford
 31 Gloucs (RLC)Bristol

August

6 Leicestershire (RLC) .Ageas Bowl
 8 Northants (RLC)Ageas Bowl
 11 Worcs (RLC)Ageas Bowl
 13 Essex (RLC)Chelmsford
 14 Sri Lanka A (Tour) . .Ageas Bowl
 15 Kent (CC)Canterbury
 21 Yorkshire (RLC)Ageas Bowl
 31 Leicestershire (CC) .Ageas Bowl

September

15 Kent (CC)Ageas Bowl
 23 Glamorgan (CC)Cardiff

Key: CC = county championship. T20 = NatWest T20 Blast. RLC = Royal London Cup (50 overs).



Back row (l-r): Adam Wheater
 Middle: James Tomlinson, Ruel Brathwaite, Dav
 Front: Danny Briggs, Michael Carberry, Jimmy

E CRICKET 2014



, Joe Gatting, Sean Terry, Will Smith, Michael Bates.
David Balcombe, Matt Coles, Chris Wood, Tom Barber, Lewis McManus.
by Adams, James Vince, Sean Ervine, Liam Dawson. Order no: 18251879

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



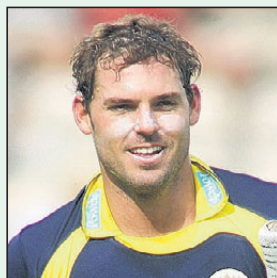
MICHAEL Lumb was Hampshire's top runscore when they lifted the Friends Provident Trophy in 2009.

Dominic Cork, in his first season with the county, was the leading wicket-taker with 20 including 4-41 in the final success against Sussex at Lord's.

2009 FRIENDS PROVIDENT TROPHY (Winners)

	BATTING			
	Inn	NO	Rns	Ave
JHK Adams	5	1	327	81.75
DJ Balcombe	1	0	2	2.00
CC Benham	8	2	333	55.50
DR Briggs	1	0	4	4.00
TG Burrows	1	0	25	25.00
MA Carberry	9	3	337	56.16
DG Cork	4	1	26	8.66
JP Crawley	5	0	169	33.80
LA Dawson	7	2	123	24.60
SM Ervine	9	1	315	39.37
Imran Tahir	1	0	5	5.00
MJ Lumb	10	1	431	47.88
AD Mascarenhas	2	0	31	15.50
N Pothas	5	3	153	76.50
BV Taylor	2	1	5	5.00
CT Tremlett	2	2	10	-

	BOWLING			
	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave Econ
DJ Balcombe	127	3	2-62	42.33 6.35
DR Briggs	78	0		3.90
MA Carberry	45	2	2-11	22.50 3.75
DG Cork	352	20	4-18	17.60 4.10
LA Dawson	349	10	4-48	34.90 5.20
SM Ervine	231	7	3-50	33.00 4.91
Imran Tahir	201	10	3-38	20.10 4.02
AD Mascarenhas	190	11	4-39	17.27 4.22
H Riazuddin	147	2	1-17	73.50 4.32
BV Taylor	342	16	3-37	21.37 4.66
CT Tremlett	201	6	3-76	33.50 5.63



MICHAEL LUMB

2009 NATWEST PRO 40

	BATTING			
	Inn	NO	Rns	Ave
JHK Adams	8	0	248	31.00
CC Benham	7	1	87	14.50
TG Burrows	2	0	8	4.00
MA Carberry	2	0	94	47.00
DG Cork	2	2	35	-
LA Dawson	7	2	149	29.80
SM Ervine	7	1	199	33.16
MJ Lumb	8	1	245	35.00
AD Mascarenhas	4	2	181	90.50
N Pothas	4	2	67	33.50
H Riazuddin	2	2	2	-
CT Tremlett	3	3	16	-
JM Vince	6	1	257	51.40

	BOWLING			
	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave Econ
JHK Adams	17	0	-	17.00
DJ Balcombe	122	3	2-56	40.66 7.62
DR Briggs	78	2	2-36	39.00 6.00
MA Carberry	15	0	-	7.50
DG Cork	157	4	2-34	39.25 5.26
LA Dawson	139	3	1-15	46.33 5.05
SM Ervine	282	7	3-23	40.28 6.13
DA Griffiths	29	4	4-29	7.25 3.62
Imran Tahir	228	8	3-30	28.50 4.99
AD Mascarenhas	173	2	1-34	86.50 5.08
H Riazuddin	168	4	2-47	42.00 5.41
BV Taylor	72	2	1-27	36.00 7.20
CT Tremlett	136	3	2-39	45.33 5.23

JIMMY Adams was the tournament's top runscore when Hampshire lifted the 2010 T20 crown for the first time.

continued on facing page

HAMPSHIRE AIM

WHO are the men tasked with taking Hampshire back into the top tier of the County Championship in 2014? Simon Walter profiles the county's squad ...

Michael Carberry

It will be a surprise if he plays for England again after his explosive interview in the *Guardian* this week.

The 33 year-old's criticism of Ashley Giles and the rest of the England management – and the rising star that is Sam Robson – will surely mean that he is available to Hampshire in all formats this summer.

Hampshire will hope he takes out his frustration on second division attacks.

No doubt he will be determined to play for a winning side after a miserable Ashes tour, albeit one in which he finished as England's second leading run scorer behind Kevin Pietersen.

Starting the Championship season like he finished last (461 at 92 in five innings) will be his main focus.

But he will be a crucial performer in all forms of the game.

Should he repeat his limited-overs form of last season it would make an even bigger mockery of the decision not to select him throughout the limited-overs leg of England's tour.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	1,251 runs @ 69.50
2010	1,221 runs @ 46.96
2011	793 runs @ 56.64
2012	414 runs @ 25.87
2013	687 runs @ 42.93

Last 5 Championship seasons bowling

2009	2 wickets @ 121.00
2010	4 wickets @ 25.00
2012	1 wicket @ 19.00
2013	1 wicket @ 87.00

Liam Dawson

Ready to hit the ground running after enjoying his best season yet with the bat in the Championship last year (1,031 runs at 49.09 as Hampshire's No.3).

Last year was also his most prolific one-day season with the bat and he was phenomenal in the slips, taking 40 catches in all cricket for Hampshire, more than any other player including wicketkeeper Adam Wheeler.

Not nearly as successful with the ball as he was in the Championship in 2012, but was more effective than ever in limited-overs cricket.

A former England Under 19s' captain, he must be in contention to take on the leadership of Hampshire's T20 side.

Played several games for Prime Bank in the Bangladesh Premier



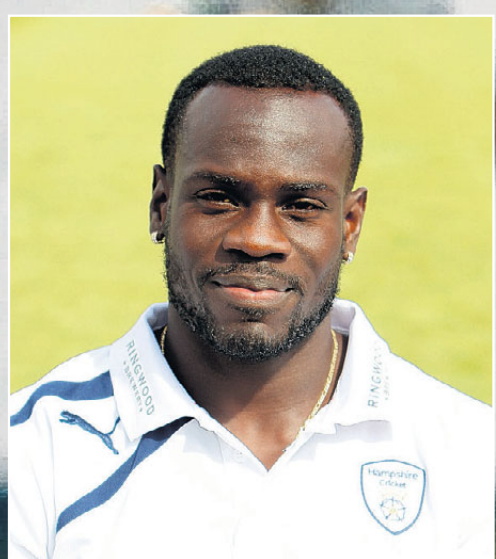
JIMMY ADAMS



LIAM DAWSON



MICHAEL CARBERRY



RUEL BRAITHWAITE

League during the winter.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	536 runs @ 31.52
2010	230 runs @ 23.00
2011	908 runs @ 36.32
2012	682 runs @ 29.65
2013	1,031 runs @ 49.09

Last 5 Championship seasons bowling

2009	7 wickets @ 44.57
2010	1 wicket @ 61.00
2011	3 wickets @ 77.00
2012	23 wickets @ 36.04

2013 9 wickets @ 66.88

David Balcombe

Will be determined to bounce back from a below-par 2013.

After finishing the 2012 season as Hampshire's leading wicket-taker with 59 LV County Championship scalps at 26.9, much was expected last year.

But he was left out of the last two matches of the season following a disappointing return of 22 wickets at 50.09 apiece and the arrivals of loan signings Matt Coles and Ruel

Braithwaite.

Was not helped by some bland Championship surfaces and was restricted to a solitary limited-overs appearance, against Scotland in the YB40.

It's very important to Hampshire's promotion ambitions and his career that he returns to his form of this season, the last year of his contract.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	10 runs @ 5.00
2010	56 runs @ 11.20

DEVON APPLIED TO JOIN THE CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1948, BUT WERE REJECTED

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



TO BAG THE TITLE



BIG SEASON AHEAD:
David Balcombe.

David Balcombe
will be determined to
bounce back from a
below-par 2013

2011* 40 runs @ 6.66
2012 299 runs @ 19.93
2013 106 runs @ 9.63
*With Kent on loan

2009 4 wickets @ 43.50
2010 24 wickets @ 30.04
2011* 33 wickets @ 17.81
2012 59 wickets @ 26.93
2013 22 wickets @ 50.04
*With Kent on loan

Ruel Brathwaite

Will be determined to improve on six Championship wickets at 37



SEAN ERVINE

apiece in the three games he has played, following his move from Durham.

It is not a record to bear comparison with the last Barbadian to play for Hampshire, one Malcolm Marshall.

But he has taken five-fors in the first division before and Hampshire believe he has potential.

Will have benefited from spending time in South Australia CC as part of Hampshire's new tie-up with Barry Richards' former club.

2012 1 wicket @ 31.00 (Durham)
2013 6 wickets @ 37.00

Jimmy Adams

Hampshire's captain in the LV County Championship is looking forward to leading what he believes is the county's best squad for several years.

But he will not be captaining Hampshire in the Natwest T20 Blast, with Dimi Mascarenhas's successor yet to be announced.

Despite having to follow James Vince and Michael Carberry at number three, he was the Royals' leading run scorer in the YB40 last season (519 at 51.9) but his Championship form (833 runs at 39.66) was hit or miss.

It included two double hundreds, against Worcestershire and Northants, at the Ageas Bowl in April and September – but six ducks in between.

He was not at his 2010 best in the FL t20 (210 runs at 19.09).

Will benefit from the captaincy experience of Will Smith and Dale Benkenstein.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009 1,279 runs @ 53.29
2010 1,351 runs @ 48.25
2011 935 runs @ 35.96
2012 987 runs @ 49.35
2013 833 runs @ 39.66

Sean Ervine

One of Hampshire's longest-serving players, he will be looking to improve on last year (454 runs at 25), his least productive LV County Championship season since 2006.

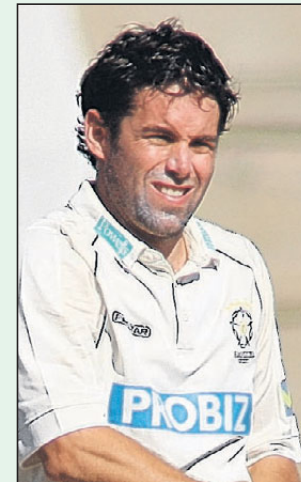
He was restricted to just an over with the ball in T20 cricket but is as dangerous as ever with the bat in limited-overs cricket and continues to be a very safe pair of hands

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

2010 CB40 (group stage)

BATTING				
	Inn	NO	Rns	Ave
JHK Adams	11	1	496	49.60
K Ali	1	1	1	-
MD Bates	3	1	3	1.50
DR Briggs	3	2	13	13.00
MA Carberry	11	1	346	34.60
DT Christian	1	1	4	-
DG Cork	9	4	101	20.20
LA Dawson	9	2	162	23.14
SM Ervine	10	0	359	35.90
HMRKB Herath	2	1	6	6.00
BAC Howell	2	0	17	8.50
PJ Hughes	2	0	33	16.50
MJ Lumb	4	0	130	32.50
ND McKenzie	11	3	319	39.87
N Pothas	6	0	96	16.00
H Riazuddin	4	1	40	13.33
JA Tomlinson	2	1	16	16.00
JM Vince	11	0	263	23.90
CP Wood	6	2	5	1.25

BOWLING					
	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave	Econ
K Ali	39	1	1-39	39.00	7.80
DR Briggs	262	4	1-26	65.50	4.85
MA Carberry	69	1	1-24	69.00	8.62
DT Christian	46	1	1-46	46.00	5.75
DG Cork	445	13	3-30	34.23	6.44
LA Dawson	198	3	1-29	66.00	5.50
SM Ervine	419	14	4-39	29.92	6.13
DA Griffiths	56	1	1-56	56.00	7.00
HMRKB Herath	170	5	2-28	34.00	5.48
BAC Howell	55	2	1-23	27.50	5.00
SP Jones	41	1	1-41	41.00	5.12
H Riazuddin	190	3	1-20	63.33	5.58
JA Tomlinson	195	9	3-33	21.66	5.79
CP Wood	368	18	4-33	20.44	5.17



NEIL MCKENZIE: Helped Hants win the 2010 t20.

2010 t20 (winners)

BATTING				
	In	NO	Rns	Ave
Abdul Razzaq	10	1	183	20.33
JHK Adams	19	2	668	39.29
CC Benham	3	1	26	13.00
DR Briggs	5	3	9	4.50
MA Carberry	11	1	205	20.50
DT Christian	8	4	33	8.25
DG Cork	9	2	56	8.00
LA Dawson	5	0	29	5.80
SM Ervine	19	6	470	36.15
SP Jones	1	1	1	-
MJ Lumb	10	0	76	7.60
ND McKenzie	17	6	440	40.00
KP Pietersen	1	0	15	15.00
N Pothas	11	4	165	23.57
JM Vince	14	1	353	27.15
CP Wood	6	2	41	10.25

BOWLING					
	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave	Econ
Abdul Razzaq	245	7	2-16	35.00	7.81
DR Briggs	445	31	3-5	14.35	6.64
DT Christian	284	9	2-37	31.55	7.81
DG Cork	455	15	2-9	30.33	6.61
LA Dawson	106	0	-	-	7.75
SM Ervine	386	16	4-12	24.12	8.77
SP Jones	195	8	3-20	24.37	8.47
AD Mascarenhas	21	1	1-21	21.00	7.00
KP Pietersen	14	0	-	-	14.00

Continued on page 28

BUCKS WERE INVITED TO JOIN THE CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1921, BUT DECLINED

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



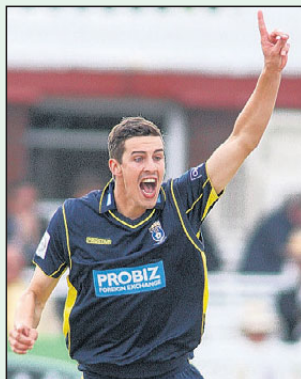
CHRIS Wood was easily Hampshire's best bowler in the CB40 competition in 2011, taking 18 wickets.

Danny Briggs again topped the county's t20 wicket hauls with 23, though Shahid Afridi, Dominic Cork and Imran Tahir all bagged 17.

2011 CB 40 (group stage)

BATTING				
	Inn	NO	Rns	Ave
JHK Adams	10	2	314	39.25
MD Bates	5	2	33	11.00
DR Briggs	5	1	30	7.50
MA Carberry	4	0	29	7.25
DG Cork	6	1	27	5.40
LA Dawson	10	2	282	35.25
SM Ervine	10	2	273	136
DA Griffiths	1	0	7	7.00
BAC Howell	8	2	340	56.66
Imran Tahir	1	0	3	3.00
SP Jones	3	3	1	-
ND McKenzie	6	2	244	61.00
AD Mascarenhas	5	0	64	12.80
JG Myburgh	3	0	81	27.00
N Pothas	1	0	15	15.00
TJ Ravenscroft	1	0	5	5.00
H Riazuddin	1	0	22	22.00
JM Vince	12	0	473	39.41
CP Wood	5	1	44	11.00

BOWLING					
	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave	Econ
DR Briggs	323	9	3-30	35.88	5.80
MA Carberry	36	0	-	-	5.14
DG Cork	195	2	1-49	97.50	5.57
LA Dawson	149	1	1-32	149.00	6.20
SM Ervine	277	6	2-23	46.16	5.65
DA Griffiths	86	4	3-36	21.50	5.37
BAC Howell	40	0	-	-	6.66
Imran Tahir	131	5	2-45	26.20	4.85
SP Jones	205	8	4-52	25.62	5.66
D Mascarenhas	275	9	3-24	30.55	5.18
JG Myburgh	19	0	-	-	7.12
H Riazuddin	92	5	3-37	18.40	6.57
CP Wood	359	18	4-34	19.94	6.03



TOP WICKET-TAKER:

Chris Wood impressed in the 2011 CB40 tournament.

2011 t20 (Semi finals)

BATTING				
	In	NO	Rns	Ave
JHK Adams	17	3	319	22.78
MD Bates	1	0	10	10.00
DR Briggs	4	2	8	4.00
DG Cork	7	4	44	14.66
LA Dawson	3	2	49	49.00
SM Ervine	11	4	219	31.28
BAC Howell	6	2	43	10.75
Imran Tahir	2	2	18	-
MJ Lumb	9	1	197	24.62
ND McKenzie	15	4	408	37.09
AD Mascarenhas	9	1	85	10.62
N Pothas	5	3	34	17.00
Shahid Afridi	9	0	180	20.00
JM Vince	16	3	445	34.23
CP Wood	1	0	3	3.00

BOWLING					
	Rns	Wkts	BB	Ave	Econ
DR Briggs	343	23	5-19	14.91	6.83
DG Cork	343	17	2-23	20.17	7.37
SM Ervine	12	1	1-9	12.00	6.00
Imran Tahir	287	17	3-13	16.88	5.97
SP Jones	33	3	2-2	11.00	6.60
D Mascarenhas	341	21	3-19	16.23	6.43
Shahid Afridi	190	17	2-20	11.17	5.50
CP Wood	135	6	2-17	22.50	7.94

STAR MEN OUT TO

From page 27

(only Liam Dawson held more catches than his 20 in the Championship, a personal best).

Like Dawson, he played in the Dhaka Premier Division before Christmas, for 'Brothers Union'.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	832 runs @ 41.60
2010	944 runs @ 42.90
2011	663 runs @ 30.13
2012	696 runs @ 34.80
2013	458 runs @ 25.44

Last 5 Championship seasons bowling

2009	13 wickets @ 61.00
2010	18 wickets @ 56.83
2011	15 wickets @ 59.73
2012	26 wickets @ 26.50
2013	17 wickets @ 33.94

Danny Briggs

Will be determined to prove a point after being dumped from England's World Twenty20 squad following a couple of bad games against Australia.

He remains one of the most effective T20 bowlers in domestic cricket and was certainly Hampshire's best performer last year, with 15 wickets at 19 apiece and the best economy rate of any of his teammates.

Spent the early part of the off-season with the England Performance Programme and enjoyed his best season with the bat in the County Championship last year (244 runs at 27.1), scoring his maiden first-class fifty, against Gloucestershire at Bristol.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	37 runs @ 12.33
2010	116 runs @ 10.54
2011	103 runs @ 6.86
2012	49 runs @ 12.25
2013	244 runs @ 27.11

2009	8 wickets @ 36.87
2010	32 wickets @ 39.43
2011	38 wickets @ 36.65
2012	5 wickets @ 49.80
2013	22 wickets @ 36.27

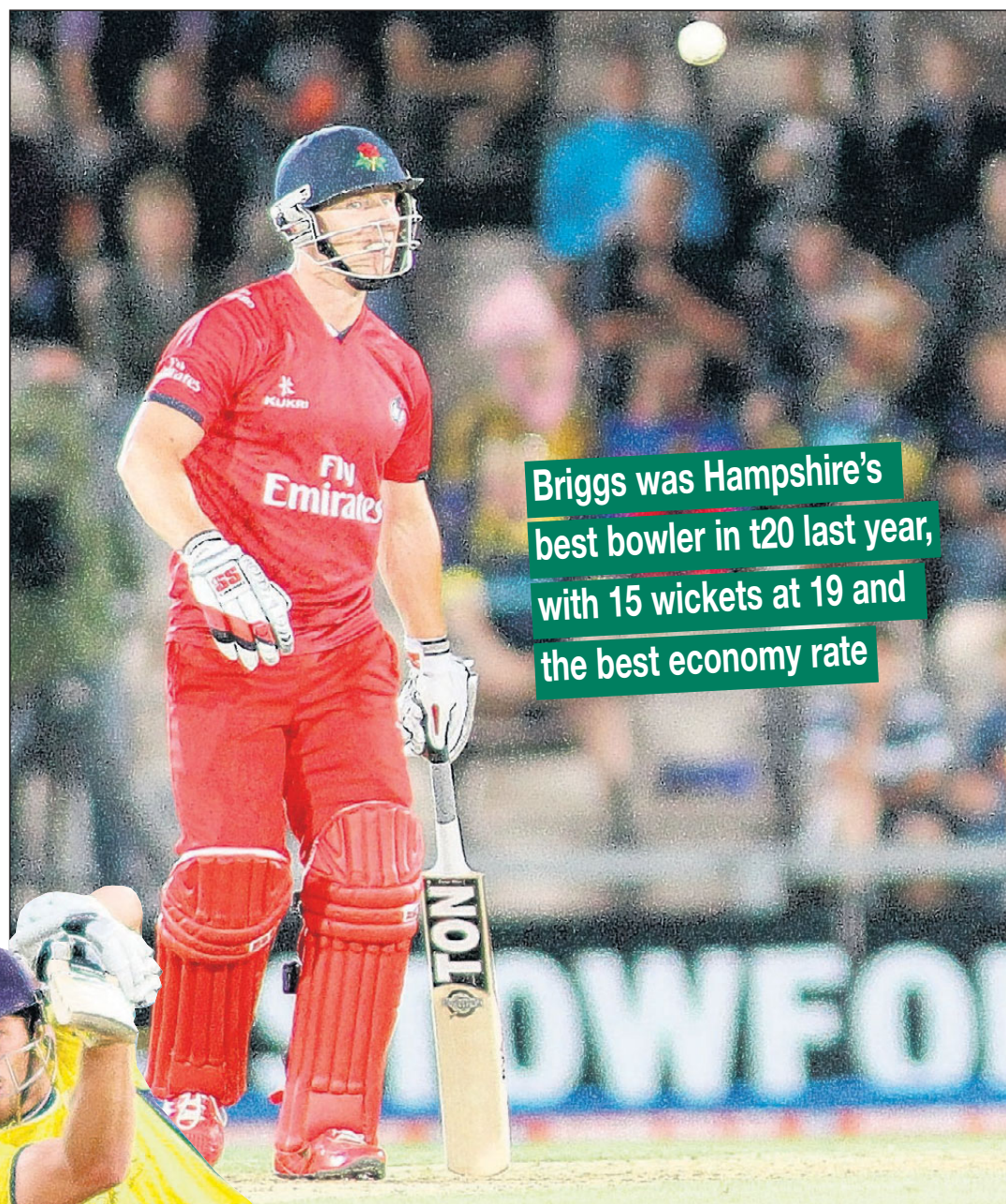
Michael Bates

Will be interesting to see how he performs in the final year of his contract following last year's arrival of Adam Wheater.

He made a respectable 117 runs at 29.25 in his five Championship appearances last year, having been controversially jettisoned as Hampshire's first-choice wicket-keeper.

He only played two T20 games in 2013, despite playing a crucial role in Hampshire winning the silverware in 2010 and 2012.

Arguably the most talented young gloveman in the country, there will



Briggs was Hampshire's best bowler in t20 last year, with 15 wickets at 19 and the best economy rate

JAMES VINCE: Has extra responsibility in 2014.

surely be some interested parties if he continues to be frustrated by a lack of first-team opportunities.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2010	92 runs @ 11.50
2011	204 runs @ 18.54
2012	437 runs @ 19.86
2013	117 runs @ 29.25

Sean Terry

The son of former Hampshire batsman and manager Paul Terry, he

scored back-to-back LV County Championship fifties in Michael Carberry's absence at the end of last season.

Born in Southampton but spent most of his childhood in Perth, Western Australia as his dad emigrated following the end of his Hampshire career in 1996.

Can bat anywhere in the top order and is also a useful fielder.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2012	34 runs @ 8.50
2013	115 runs @ 57.50

EX-HAMPSHIRE ACE PHIL MEAD HAS SCORED MOST CHAMPIONSHIP

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight

PROVE A POINT ...



DETERMINED TO PROVE A POINT: Danny Briggs.

James Tomlinson

Hampshire's most experienced LV County Championship bowler will be aiming to repeat last season's form, when he claimed his biggest haul of wickets (53 at 24 apiece) since his annus mirabilis of 2008.

Only four bowlers (Alan Richardson, Michael Hogan, Kyle Hogg and Simon Kerrigan) took more wickets in the Championship's second tier than the 31 year-old left-armer.

His success was all the more impressive considering he was

shouldering the attack on some very flat wickets.

His cause will be boosted if the Ageas Bowl wickets have more carry in them, as has been requested.

And he should also benefit from sharing the bowling burden with the likes of Matt Coles and Kyle Abbott.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	92 runs @ 13.14
2010	198 runs @ 12.37
2011	36 runs @ 9.00
2012	45 runs @ 6.42

2013	72 runs @ 10.28
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Last 5 Championship seasons bowling

2009	30 wickets @ 39.76
2010	46 wickets @ 35.30
2011	15 wickets @ 38.20
2012	43 wickets @ 26.30
2013	53 wickets @ 24.16

Adam Wheater

Is sure to start as first-choice wicketkeeper-batsman.

Finished his season strongly with the bat, with centuries against

Lancashire and, fittingly, in a winning cause against his former Essex teammates in the final game, following his controversial move from his home county in 2013.

While he admits he is no Michael Bates with the gloves, he did little wrong behind the stumps either.

Was more effective in the YB40 than the t20, the highlights of his maiden limited-overs season with Hampshire being a 41-ball 70 against Derbyshire and a crucial 38 against Essex.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	0 runs @ 0.00
2011	804 runs @ 42.31
2012	391 runs @ 35.54
2013*	585 runs @ 36.56

*With Hampshire

James Vince

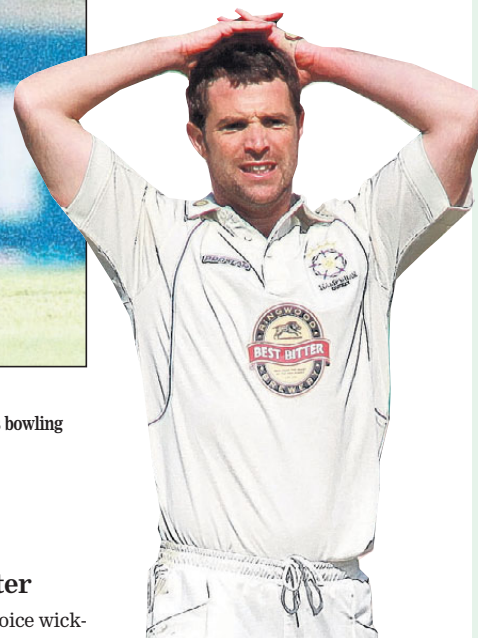
Hampshire's new T20 captain and vice-captain in the other formats, will be determined to thrive on the extra responsibility and win full England honours by repeating his outstanding form of last season.

He did not enjoy a prolific winter, passing fifty just once in four matches for the England Performance Programme in Australia and the Lions in Sri Lanka.

But if he is as consistent as he was last season, he will not be far away.

He was Hampshire's leading aggregate run scorer in 2013, with 1,766 overall, thanks to a career-best season in the LV County Championship (1,101 runs at 61.6.)

Continued on page 30



JAMES TOMLINSON

MICHAEL Carberry and James Vince both scored over 500 runs as Hampshire won the CB 40 tournament in 2012.

Vince was also the top runscorer as the county claimed a limited overs double that year, lifting the t20 for the second time in three seasons.

2012 CB 40 (winners)

BATTING				
	Inn	NO	Rns	Ave
JHK Adams	12	2	333	33.30
K Ali	4	1	58	19.33
MD Bates	5	1	37	9.25
DR Briggs	4	1	42	14.00
MA Carberry	9	2	598	85.42
LA Dawson	9	2	117	16.71
SM Ervine	10	2	218	27.25
DA Griffiths	3	3	5	-
SM Katich	11	4	213	30.42
ND McKenzie	6	0	181	30.16
AD Mascarenhas	3	0	89	29.66
H Riazuddin	2	0	8	4.00
JM Vince	13	3	555	55.50
CP Wood	5	1	30	7.50

BOWLING				
	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave
K Ali	256	10	3-39	25.60
DR Briggs	410	19	4-32	21.57
MA Carberry	8	1	1-8	8.00
LA Dawson	381	7	2-26	54.42
SM Ervine	292	11	3-35	26.54
DA Griffiths	318	12	3-29	26.50
SM Katich	51	1	1-9	51.00
AD Mascarenhas	172	6	2-17	28.66
H Riazuddin	53	0		7.57
CP Wood	511	19	5-22	26.89



TOP SCORER: James Vince topped the t20 run-charts in 2012.

2012 t20 (winners)

BATTING				
	In	NO	Rns	Ave
JHK Adams	10	1	195	21.66
K Ali	2	2	25	-
MA Carberry	5	0	83	16.60
LA Dawson	3	1	47	23.50
SM Ervine	8	3	190	38.00
SM Katich	6	2	165	41.25
ND McKenzie	9	3	140	23.33
AD Mascarenhas	4	2	54	27.00
GJ Maxwell	7	3	179	44.75
JM Vince	10	2	254	31.75

BOWLING				
	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave
K Ali	122	1	1-31	122.00
DR Briggs	261	6	2-28	43.50
LA Dawson	218	9	2-10	24.22
SM Ervine	201	6	2-22	33.50
DA Griffiths	40	1	1-40	40.00
AD Mascarenhas	247	15	2-11	16.46
GJ Maxwell	182	7	3-36	26.00
CP Wood	282	9	3-26	31.33

RUNS IN HISTORY - HE COMPILED AN ASTONISHING 46,268 RUNS

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



HAMPSHIRE fell at the semi final hurdle as they failed to retain any of the two one day trophies they'd scooped in 2012.

Michael Carberry was in superb form in both 40-over and 20-over cricket, smashing centuries in each format against Lancashire at The Ageas Bowl.

2013 YB 40 (semi finals)

BATTING				
	Inn	NO	Rns	Ave
JHK Adams	13	3	519	51.90
GJ Bailey	3	0	46	15.33
DR Briggs	3	2	7	4
MA Carberry	11	1	471	47.10
LA Dawson	10	2	318	39.75
SM Ervine	10	1	311	34.55
DA Griffiths	1	1	0	-
ND McKenzie	7	0	168	24.00
AD Mascarenhas	7	1	112	18.66
H Riazuddin	1	0	15	15.00
MDT Roberts	2	0	48	24.00
Sohail Tanvir	3	2	14	14.00
SP Terry	1	0	33	33.00
JA Tomlinson	1	1	1	-
JM Vince	12	2	396	39.60
AJA Wheeler	10	3	195	27.85
CP Wood	8	4	90	22.50

BOWLING

	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave	Econ
DJ Balcombe	28	2	2-28	14.00	4.66
DR Briggs	510	10	2-35	51.00	6.07
MA Carberry	68	3	3-37	22.66	5.23
LA Dawson	430	10	2-26	43.00	5.65
SM Ervine	233	6	2-20	38.83	5.68
DA Griffiths	164	5	3-42	32.80	7.45
AD Mascarenhas	315	13	5-42	24.23	4.56
H Riazuddin	100	2	1-28	50.00	5.26
Sohail Tanvir	207	17	4-29	12.17	4.38
BJ Taylor	50	2	2-50	25.00	6.25
JA Tomlinson	63	1	1-38	63.00	7.00
JM Vince	38	0			6.33
CP Wood	532	17	3-23	31.29	5.51



TON-DERFUL: Michael Carberry celebrates reaching three figures in the T20 against Lancashire.

2013 T20 (semi finals)

BATTING				
	Inn	NO	Rns	Ave
JHK Adams	11	0	210	19.09
MD Bates	1	0	0	-
DR Briggs	1	1	5	-
MA Carberry	11	2	502	55.77
LA Dawson	10	4	63	10.50
SM Ervine	11	3	238	29.75
ND McKenzie	8	5	301	100.33
AD Mascarenhas	4	1	24	8.00
Sohail Tanvir	2	1	9	9.00
JM Vince	11	0	269	24.45
AJA Wheeler	5	2	22	7.33
CP Wood	2	1	13	13.00

BOWLING

	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave	Econ
DR Briggs	286	15	3-19	19.06	6.50
LA Dawson	277	13	4-19	21.30	7.28
SM Ervine	7	0	-	-	7.00
DA Griffiths	116	4	2-23	29.00	7.25
AD Mascarenhas	310	12	2-19	25.83	7.56
Sohail Tanvir	272	9	3-29	30.22	8.68
JM Vince	30	1	1-5	30.00	5.00
CP Wood	344	12	3-31	28.66	7.78

NEW FACES ADD TO

from page 29

Only Simon Katich (73) and Moeen Ali (62) averaged more in division two and he passed the 1,000-run milestone for the first time.

The highlights of his limited-overs season were his sensational 129 in the first game of Hampshire's YB40 defence against Essex at Chelmsford and his 30-ball 60 in the T20 quarter-final against Lancashire.

Both contributed to televised century partnerships with Michael Carberry.

His medium-pacers were also an effective option.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	282 runs @ 25.63
2010	795 runs @ 34.56
2011	723 runs @ 28.92
2012	417 runs @ 24.52
2013	1,101 runs @ 61.16

Last Championship season bowling

2013	9 wickets @ 44.00
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Chris Wood

Will miss the start of the season after undergoing microfracture surgery on his left knee earlier this year, having bowled through the pain barrier for much of 2013.

Primarily a limited-overs bowler, he struggled in the Championship last year (15 wickets at 43.9), no doubt partly because of the pain he was in.

But he did well in the limited-overs competitions, particularly during the group stage of the YB40, in which he finished as Hampshire's joint leading wicket-taker with 17, and he continues to develop as an exciting batting talent.

Hoping to be available for the start of Hampshire's T20 campaign against Glamorgan at The Ageas Bowl on May 16.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2010	68 runs @ 17.00
2011	259 runs @ 25.90
2012	318 runs @ 24.46
2013	256 runs @ 23.27

Last 5 Championship seasons bowling

2010	6 wickets @ 26.00
2011	25 wickets @ 27.95
2012	19 wickets @ 35.94
2013	15 wickets @ 43.93

Matt Coles

His arrival from Kent on a three year-contract is the main reason Hampshire fans are looking forward to the season with so much optimism.

The 23 year-old took 15 wickets at 15.3 apiece during his loan spell at the end of last season as Hampshire



NEW SIGNINGS: Ex-Brighton striker Joe Gating, pictured celebrating a goal for the Seagulls in 2006, and Will Smith, inset.



won their last two Championship matches, while bowling with the extra yard of pace and aggression that had been missing from the attack all season.

He also made two fifties, showing the sort of form that will make him an excellent replacement for Dimi Mascarenhas in the one-day side.

It will be interesting to see if he is also used regularly by Hampshire in T20 cricket.

His all-round ability suggests he should be.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	30 runs @ 15.00
2010	322 runs @ 20.12
2011	236 runs @ 19.66
2012	371 runs @ 23.18
2013	136 runs @ 17.00
2013*	118 runs @ 29.50
*With Hampshire	

Last 5 Championship seasons bowling

2009	2 wickets @ 65.00
2010	24 wickets @ 36.70
2011	26 wickets @ 37.11
2012	52 wickets @ 22.03
2013	13 wickets @ 42.23
2013*	21 wickets @ 24.00
*With Hampshire	

Tom Barber

An exciting prospect, the left-arm can bowl at pace and has signed a two-year development contract.

Has played six games for England Under-19s and turns 20 next month. Comes from Christchurch and began playing at Parley CC before being snapped up by Hampshire as a 16 year-old

Has had back problems, which

ruled him out of the recent U19 World Cup, but that is a rite of passage for most young fast bowlers.

Has deferred a university place to concentrate on his cricket career after passing A-levels in Chemistry, Biology and Physics with flying colours.

Joe Gating

A former Brighton & Hove Albion striker who made his Football League debut in the Championship against Saints eight years ago.

When he makes his debut he will join an elite club of Hampshire cricketers to have played professional football, others including CB Fry, Henry Horton, Phil Mead, John Arnold, Ted Drake and Arthur Holt.

But he will be the first to have played professional sport at St

KENT'S TITCH FREEMAN HAS TAKEN MORE CHAMPIONSHIP WICKETS

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight

HAMPSHIRE SQUAD



ALL-ROUND TALENT: Matt Coles.

Coles' arrival is the main reason Hampshire fans are looking forward to the season with so much optimism

Heading North...

FORMER Australia Test batsman Marcus North has signed for Derbyshire just one day after ending his first-class career Down Under.

The 34-year-old one-time Hampshire batsman will cover for Shvinnarine Chandernaul during June and September, when the Guyanese left-hander is required for West Indies Test duty against New Zealand and Bangladesh.

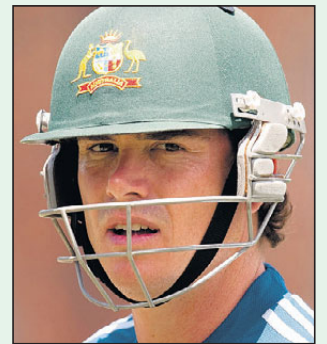
North finished the 2013/14 campaign as the leading run-scorer in the Sheffield Shield, making 888 at an average of 68 for Western Australia to be named player of the year.

But he had a tragic time off the field as his brother died in a car accident in November.

He announced in a press conference on Thursday that it was his last season with the team, and announced he was making Derbyshire his SIXTH English county a day later.

Left-hander North played 21 Tests, two one-day internationals and one Twenty20 for Australia, scoring five Test centuries including 117 on his debut against South Africa in Johannesburg in February 2009.

North had a short spell with Derbyshire in 2006, making 465 at an average of 93 during a brief but memorable three-match stint.



He hopes to help the team accomplish a Division Two promotion campaign in the County Championship, and said: "I've enjoyed arguably one of my best seasons in Australia, so the opportunity to play this specific role for Derbyshire was very exciting and has come at the perfect time in my career."

"They obviously have a talented group of players so hopefully I can assist in getting the boys back up to Division One quick smart."

Derbyshire's elite performance director Graeme Welch said of the former Lancashire, Glamorgan, Durham, Gloucestershire and Hampshire man: "To have a player of Marcus's experience and calibre joining us is massive for the squad."

"I captained Marcus when he played for us in 2006 and the class he showed with his batting was unbelievable."

North's Hampshire career was incredibly brief – one innings in a Championship game against Warwickshire at Edgbaston five years ago this month.

He made 15 in the first innings before leaving mid match to join up with the Australian squad. Michael Lumb was given special dispensation to bat in his place in the second innings.

North could feature against Hampshire as Derbyshire visit The Ageas Bowl in a Championship encounter in early June.

Mary's and The Ageas Bowl.

Scored five goals in 51 appearances for Brighton, most of which were made as a substitute.

The son of former Arsenal defender Steve and the nephew of Ashes-winning England captain Mike, he scored one century for Sussex but mostly played limited-overs cricket for his home county, which is likely to be the case with Hampshire.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	158 runs @ 31.60
2010	124 runs @ 13.77
2011	407 runs @ 45.22
2012	279 runs @ 21.46
2013	58 runs @ 11.60
All with Sussex	

Lewis McManus

The Southern Electric Premier

League's Young Cricketer of the Year is on a two-year development contract after impressing with his performances for the academy last year.

He scored two SEPL centuries in 2013 before scoring his maiden ton in the Second Eleven Championship, against a Surrey attack including Stuart Meaker, Jon Lewis and Gary Keedy.

A wicketkeeper-batsman, his progress last season signalled the end of Adam Rouse's Hampshire career.

Will be providing competition for Michael Bates and Adam Wheater. McManus hails from Poole and played several games for England Under-19s last season.

Bobby Parks must take a lot of the credit for Hampshire's pool of wicketkeeping talent, which also includes Tom Alsop, who

impressed as a substitute last year.

Will Smith

Brings to Hampshire the experience of winning four County Championship titles – including one as captain.

A graduate of Durham University, where he captained David Balcombe (he also captained Alastair Cook at Bedford School), Smith returned to the city after playing three games for Nottinghamshire as they won the 2005 title, ahead of second-placed Hampshire.

He ended his Durham career as a Championship winner for the third time in six years.

Established himself in 2008 with the most prolific season of his

career (925 Championship runs at 51.25), before being appointed captain following the departure of Dale Benkenstein.

Led Durham to a successful defence of their first title and played more games during Durham's Championship success under Paul Collingwood last season than any other, scoring 786 runs at 30.23 and passing 6,000 career first-class runs (at 31.27) in his final match.

An outstanding fielder, Smith also enjoyed one of his best one-day seasons (248 YB40 runs at 62) last year.

Last 5 Championship seasons batting

2009	700 runs @ 33.33
2010	114 runs @ 16.28
2011	978 runs @ 39.12
2012	395 runs @ 16.45
2013	786 runs @ 30.23

THAN ANY OTHER BOWLER IN HISTORY - A STAGGERING 3,151

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



Changing times ...

From page 23

Mascarenhas became the first Englishman to bag a t20 hat-trick in taking 5-14 against Sussex.

Shane Watson, brought in to replace Clarke as Hampshire's second overseas Aussie, then cracked an unbeaten 97 in the win against Kent.

Drawn at home to Lancashire in the quarter finals, Hampshire were easily beaten by nine wickets.

They would have to wait six more years to qualify for finals day for the first time.

2014

Another year brings more changes to the fixture list.

The Championship remains two divisions, with each county playing each other twice.

There is a new one-day competition, the Royal London Cup.

Replacing the Yorkshire Bank



CHANGES: Most t20 group games will now be played on Friday nights.

competition – a 40-over tournament – the RL Cup will be played over 50 overs in line with one-day international cricket.

It won't begin until late July, with each county playing eight group games. The top two in each group progress to the knockout stages with the final at Lord's on September 20.

The t20 Cup is now firmly established in the county fixture list.

The competition has seen some changes, including a punishing 16-game qualifying group campaign in 2010 and 2011 when all the fixtures were shoe-horned into a tight period.

This season it has a new name and new sponsor, changing from the Friends Life t20 to the NatWest T20 Blast.

The fixtures start earlier than ever in 2014, the first games taking place on Friday, May 16.

Friday night action is a consistent theme this year, with 87 of the 126 group games taking place on that day over a ten-week course.

Nine of Hampshire's 14 group games take place on a Friday.

History is made on Saturday, May 17 when Middlesex host Sussex AND Essex at Lord's in the first domestic t20 'double header' played on the same day.

For the second season running, Edgbaston will host Finals Day on Saturday, August 23.

Simon Carter

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SPORTS EDITOR

HAMPSHIRE start their third season in the second tier of the County Championship knowing they have the players to mount a serious promotion challenge.

Their likely top five is packed with batsmen capable of scoring 1,000 runs in a 16-game campaign.

They have a wicket-keeper averaging almost 40 with the bat in first class cricket.

They have three seam bowlers who have taken more than 50 Championship wickets in a season in recent times.

Another fast bowler is coming off a highly successful season in South African domestic cricket.

And they have a spinner widely regarded as one of the most promising in English cricket.

With all that in mind, supporters should surely expect better in 2014 – certainly with regards to the Championship.

Hampshire were widely predicted to challenge for the top tier title in 2011, yet finished rock bottom.

They finished their first season back in the second tier in 2012 in fourth place, but nearer bottom club Gloucestershire in terms of points than the second automatic promotion place.

It was a similar story last year, where Hampshire again finished fourth but nearer second bottom Glamorgan points-wise than second placed Northants.

It is stating the obvious to say that having consistent wicket-taking bowlers improves your chances of winning games.

So it was again in 2013.

Lancashire went up as second tier champions with Kyle Hogg (60), Steven Kerrigan (57) and Glen Chapple (53) sharing 160 Championship wickets between them.

Northants followed them up with Trent Copeland (45), David Willey (45) and Steven Crook (43) bagging 133 between them.

In contrast, Hampshire's leading three wicket-takers – James Tomlinson (53), Danny Briggs (22) and David Balcombe (22) – shared 97 wickets.

That is a big difference.

Hampshire, unsurprisingly, identified their attack as being in greater need of strengthening than their batting when considering their 2013 overseas player.

Kyle Abbott has been in good form for Dolphins in the South African Sunfoil Series over the winter.

He has bagged 25 wickets at just 13.4, the lowest average among the 29 players to have taken at least TEN wickets in the competition.

Only last week he took 3-16 in the second innings as Dolphins routed



EXPERIENCED:
James Tomlinson

Neil McKenzie's Lions for just 85.

Abbott has never played county cricket, but Hampshire will be hoping he has a big impact when he arrives after missing the first couple of Championship matches.

Elsewhere, pace bowling trio Tomlinson, David Balcombe and Matt Coles, now permanently on board after joining initially on loan from Kent last August, have all taken more than 50 wickets in the last three seasons.

In the spin bowling department, this is a big season for Briggs.

The England limited overs inter-

national endured a nightmare 2012 Championship season, taking just five wickets and playing second fiddle to Liam Dawson (23 wickets).

Briggs enjoyed a much happier 2013, ending with 22 wickets while Dawson took just nine.

Briggs, though, has not taken four wickets in an innings since 2011 and is yet to really prove himself as a major Championship match-winner.

Until he does that, an England Test call appears a long way away.

Batting wise, Hampshire have undoubted ability.

I will be very surprised if Michael Carberry is retained by England in the wake of the Ashes debacle.

The fact the opening batsman was deemed surplus to requirements for England's subsequent List A and t20 World Cup campaigns spoke volumes.

Carberry this week went public with his criticisms of the England camp – mainly communication-related issues – and it is hard not to have sympathy with him.

Though his Ashes scores were better than many of his colleagues, surely the time has come for the national selectors to consider the likes of Sam Robson.

If it is England's loss, then Carberry's county availability will certainly be Hampshire's gain.

Like his captain Jimmy Adams, Carberry scored 1,000 plus Championship runs in 2009 and 2010 – both summers when Hampshire were a top tier county.

James Vince and Dawson both passed 1,000 Championship runs for the first time last season, while new signing Will Smith twice amassed more than 900 first class runs for Durham – in 2008 and 2011.

Vince produced his best ever four-day form last year, scoring four hundreds and averaging more than 60.

Generally considered a limited overs specialist during his first few years as a Hampshire regular, Vince needs to repeat his 2013 first class form if he is to one day make the England Test debut many pundits believe possible.

Smith is now on his third county after spells with Nottinghamshire and Durham.

He should be helped in his latest new challenge by the familiar face of his former Durham colleague Dale Benkenstein, who was appointed Hampshire's coach a few months after Smith's arrival.

After that first five, Sean Ervine brings a wealth of experience as a middle order all-rounder.

Though there were few fireworks last year, he still scored almost 500 Championship runs and provided 17 wickets as a back-up seamer.

Wicket-keeper Adam Wheater is no slouch with the bat as a No 7, as a career first class average just under 40 testifies.

To sum up, Hampshire's squad contains proven quality at the level they are playing at.

There is the classic mixture of youth and experience.

Briggs seems to have been around for ages, but in fact does not turn 23 until later this month.

Vince was only 23 last month, while Wheater and Dawson are 24 and Coles turns 24 next month.

That's five players aged 24 or under, with Carberry, Adams, Smith, Ervine and Tomlinson providing the thirtysomething know-how of more than a decade of Championship action behind them.

HAMPSHIRE LIKELY XI: Carberry, Adams, Vince, Smith, Dawson, Ervine, Wheater, Coles, Tomlinson, Briggs, Balcombe.

DAILY ECHO AND SPORTS PINK - BEST FOR LOCAL CRICKET

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



WINNING MIX

Robson leaves no doubt over his allegiance

SAM Robson has launched a staunch defence of his commitment to English cricket, claiming his six-year Middlesex track record should leave his loyalties in no doubt.

The Australia-born 24-year-old is a prime candidate for an England Test debut after impressing on winter tours of Australia and Sri Lanka with the England Performance Programme and the England Lions.

Robson hit five centuries in just six matches, showcasing his maturing top-order talent.

He was at it again at The Ageas Bowl earlier this week, hitting 107 for Middlesex in a friendly against Hampshire before retiring.

England host Sri Lanka in June and India in July for Test action, and Robson can force his way to selection with a strong start to the new Championship campaign.

Robson swapped New South Wales for Middlesex straight out of school, seeking a gap-year style life experience as much as a cricketing apprenticeship.

The straight-talking run maker said he caught the county cricket bug so quickly he has never thought about leaving – so when his Englishness is called into question he remains steadfastly unmoved.

"I came over here when I left school, loved everything about it, loved Middlesex and turning up at Lord's as a professional cricketer," said Robson, whose mother is English.

"And the more time I've spent in London, the more I've loved it, and it's become my home. So that's the deal; I've become used to life here, this is where I live and this is where I'm a professional cricketer.

"Four-day games, the Championship, that's the great strength of the English system.

That's what's unique, and that's what I love most about county cricket.

"We're professionals, we're paid to play cricket, not sit around. I think it's a great system.

"There's no better place to be working on your game and improving than out in the middle."

Robson said there was hardly any decision to make when England selectors sounded him out about touring with the EPP and the Lions across the winter.

"Middlesex is where I've learned to play first-class cricket," he said. "It's not something that really bothers me [questions on nationality].

"I've been here for a long time now. I love London, I've been here since I finished school and I haven't given it too much thought.

"I grew up in Australia, I still go back there in the winters and my family live there, there's no hiding that and I've never tried.

"I've tried to reinforce my commitment to the English cricket system ever since I've been here though.

"I committed simply by coming in the first place, signing up and giving up opportunities in Australia when I was very young. So from then on my focus has always been here.

"Regardless of whether I move up the ranks or not, just by play-

ing country cricket here all the time I'm committed to England.

"I've toured with the Lions and the EPP. I've grown up overseas but I've committed to England and that's all there is."

Middlesex kick off their Championship Division One campaign with a trip to Hove to face Sussex on Sunday.

Admitting early-season form will be pivotal to any chances of Test recognition this summer, Robson revealed Michael Vaughan and Michael Slater as the batsmen he most admired growing up.

"I'm very happy with my form over the last 18 months, but I know the next few months will be vital for both me and Middlesex," he said.



STAUNCH DEFENCE: Sam Robson on his way to a century for Middlesex at The Ageas Bowl earlier this week.

Did You Know?

KP becomes a Zouk – but Dimi's undrafted

KEVIN Pietersen will play for the St Lucia Zouks in the Caribbean Premier League after being selected as the first pick in the 2014 draft.

But his former Hampshire colleagues Dimi Mascarenhas, below, and Simon Jones went undrafted.

Pietersen will join West Indies captain Darren Sammy and Australian veteran Brad Hodge at the Zouks who are coached by former England and Glamorgan batsman Matthew Maynard.

The tournament begins in July and ends in August.

Pietersen's first round selection meant he was in the maximum 80,000 US dollars 'salary slab', setting his base earning at approximately £48,000.



FROM PAGE 23

JAMES Vince and Liam Dawson both scored over 1,000 Championship runs as Hampshire finished fourth again in the second tier in 2013.

Hampshire most runs

JM Vince	1,101
LA Dawson	1,031
JHK Adams	833

Hampshire most wickets

JA Tomlinson	.53
DJ Balcombe and DR Briggs	.22
MT Coles	.21

Championship most runs

MM Ali (Worcestershire)	1,375
EJH Eckersley (Leicestershire)	1,275
DI Stevens (Kent)	1,268

Championship most wickets

G Onions (Durham)	.70
A Richardson (Worcestershire)	.69
MG Hogan (Glamorgan)	.67

	P	W	L	D	Bt	Bw	Pts
Lancashire	16	8	1	7	45	45	238
Northants	16	5	3	8	55	43	202
Essex	16	5	4	7	43	41	182
Hampshire	16	4	3	9	45	35	171
Worcestershire	16	5	6	5	29	43	167
Gloucestershire	16	4	4	8	43	36	167
Kent	16	3	2	11	39	31	151
Glamorgan	16	3	6	7	41	39	149
Leicestershire	16	0	8	8	23	32	79

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



'Stale' England are missing KP - Smith

KEVIN Pietersen still boasts the match-winning genius that could have helped Alastair Cook answer fundamental captaincy questions and reinvigorate "stale" England, according to Graeme Smith.

Former South Africa skipper Smith admitted he was surprised at England's decision to jettison Pietersen after their disastrous Ashes winter whitewash in Australia.

Ankle surgery ruined Smith's first campaign at Surrey after signing a three-year deal with the club last summer, but now the 33-year-old is fit and itching to line up alongside Pietersen for the new season.

Cook has claimed sacking Pietersen, pictured right, was the "brave" and correct decision, but ex-Proteas skipper Smith believes England should have found a way to persevere with his Surrey team-mate.

"I'm uninformed just speaking from an outsider's perspective, but it would be surprising when you have a really quality player like that, and you wouldn't try to make it work," said Smith of 34-year-old Pietersen.

"He's in the middle of his career, has a few good years left in him.

"If there's a guy in his last two seasons and he's becoming gumpy, then you start to look at things differently.

"But Kevin's still got plenty of energy, he's fit, healthy and still performing well: it was surprising.

"I think it's always disappointing when



those things [confidentiality agreements] start getting in the way of cricket.

"I would have thought the environment could have managed him.

"A match-winner like that, performing well and motivated: you just can't help looking at the Twenty20 World Cup and thinking he would have added value.

"It's always nice to have a player like that: who you know can walk out and win you a game single-handedly.

"And it's nice to build teams around people like that.

"Players like that can single-handedly win you a semi-final or a big contest that can ultimately win you a competition, so I'm excited to have him around."

Smith retired from Test cricket in March, ending a stellar 109-match stint as South Africa captain.

The gritty top-order batsman assumed the South Africa captaincy after just eight Tests, guiding the Proteas to the top of the world game.

Admitting England face a battle to rebuild brittle confidence after a horrendous winter, Smith said Pietersen's regular availability is a huge bonus for Surrey, who start their LV=County Championship Division Two campaign on Sunday, hosting Glamorgan at The Oval.

"England to me look a little stale, they look like they need new energy, they look like they need a direction, someone to galvanise them," said Smith.

Hogan out to be a hero again ...

GLAMORGAN strike bowler Michael Hogan is targeting becoming a world leader once more when he leads the Welsh attack again this summer.

Hogan was the world's leading first-class wicket taker in 2013 with 108 victims in 24 matches for Glamorgan (67) and Western Australia (41).

"I played about ten more games than anyone else but if you bowl the overs you get the rewards and it's nice," said Hogan, right. "I am at my peak probably now and hopefully that will last for a few more years."

The 32-year-old also claimed a century of victims in all formats for Glamorgan last summer, helping them beat Hampshire in the semi-final of the YB 40 before losing the final to Nottinghamshire at Lord's.

"If I could come away with a similar season I would be happy," added Hogan. "You never know if you will be able to top last year and there is the threat of second season syndrome.

"But you just go out there and do the best you can and I won't change anything. If it works last year then hopefully it will work this summer.

"I enjoyed my time with Glamorgan and thought we under-achieved in four-day cricket but had some success in the one-day stuff. "It was great to play in front of 15,000 people at Lord's where we played



against a good Notts side.

"We got close and hopefully we can go one better this year. We've good players in the group and if we are more consistent we will have some success."

Hogan, below, arrived back in Wales recently after helping guide Western Australia to the Sheffield Shield final where they lost to New South Wales.

Hogan, who took 36 wickets at an average of 26 in ten matches, will return to Australia later briefly this month for the birth of his second child and is set miss two Glamorgan championship matches against Worcestershire and Leicestershire.

There are also doubts also over his availability for the four-day and T20 opener against

mid May.

Hogan and Murray Goodwin missed this week's first-class opener against the Cardiff MCCU students but the pair should play in the Championship opener at Surrey this weekend.



COUNTY cricket will soon be conspicuously centre stage, more so than at any time in the past decade at least.

The spotlight will descend over the next two months on events nationwide – on many venues long unaccustomed to such profile and scrutiny – as England's finest do battle not only for their clubs but for their own international futures, **writes DAVID CLOUGH.**

The coincidence of a miserable Ashes winter, and its destabilising aftermath, with a new calendar for 2014 means that individually and collectively there are countless questions requiring answers in some of the earliest exchanges in the LV= County Championship.

Can England captain Alastair Cook, for example, put the Ashes debacle behind him?

Runs for Essex are the only currency which will bring renewed confidence and help him become the leader England are hoping for at the start of the new era prescribed by management.

Yet if Cook is hoping for some comfort with his county, Jonathan Trott's need is surely even greater.

Inked in for so long as Test and one-day international number three before having to leave the Ashes tour after one match with a stress-related illness, Trott's route back to the international fold is far from certain.

In the meantime, his every run will be monitored by millions.

Trott played his first match since Brisbane in November, in an Edgbaston friendly against Gloucestershire this week.

He will then have a maximum of ten championship innings before the first Test against Sri Lanka at Lord's on June 12.

The pragmatic decision to delay a programme of seven Tests until mid-summer – tacit acknowledgement, perhaps, of the Indian Premier League's continued encroachment on opposition availability – means those hoping to restate or consolidate their England credentials will have almost half a championship season in which to do so.

Josh Buttler, between World Twenty20 and May ODIs, must demonstrate his red-ball effectiveness in front of and behind the stumps for new club Lancashire.

Elsewhere, Steven Finn must provide, for himself and his country, evidence that he is back on

BIG HITTING: Aaron Finch on his way to a century at The Ageas Bowl last summer.

GOT A STORY? EMAIL echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



ENGLAND FUTURES ON LINE AS COUNTY GAME TAKES CENTRE STAGE



NEW CHALLENGE: Jos Buttler, right, has swapped Somerset for Lancashire.

track as a potential pace spearhead in all international formats.

For others, such as injured rising stars Joe Root and Ben Stokes, time may be a little shorter.

For cricket itself, perhaps more importantly than any of the above, 2014 gives the domestic diary a shop window of heightened interest – and one which need not necessarily be transitory.

The current structure of this country's number one summer sport dictates that it is England first, England second, England third – and county competition a mere facilitator.

Of course, it will be Root's thumb, Stokes' scaphoid or Finn's trailing right knee which will make many of the initial headlines.

The improbable search for a Test spinner to succeed the retired Graeme Swann will doubtless occupy plenty of column inches, too.

But en route, the trick – for LV=, then the NatWest T20 Blast and in turn the new Royal London Cup – will be to engage on their own terms.

Can cash-strapped Durham, for example, somehow defend their four-day title under veteran captain and triple Ashes-winner Paul Collingwood?

Will 2013 Twenty20 sensations Northamptonshire be able to follow up that success, and also be a force in the championship after last summer's surprise promotion?

Which county houses the team most likely to be the inaugural winners of the returning 50-over competition under its new sponsors?

The first of those questions, and plenty of others

associated with it, will begin to unravel this month – an opportunity for teams to steal a march on rivals, if the weather is kind.

Yorkshire, who had no answer to Durham's late surge last August and September, look better equipped than most to go very close again or maybe even clinch the championship deal this time.

With the acquisition of Aaron Finch, they have much improved Twenty20 prospects too – although there is no reason to suppose, with the skills and energy of such as Steven Crook and David Willey in tow, that Northamptonshire are any flash in the pan in the shortest format.

It is impossible to rule out Hampshire, though, who will be aiming to qualify for their fifth successive Finals Day.

The beauty of the 50-over competition is its winnability for all – Warwickshire, Surrey, Hampshire and Nottinghamshire won the last four 40-over tournaments – and there is no reason why it should be a poor relation when it comes to seasonal ambitions.

The reinstatement of a full 100 overs of cricket in one day, a proper place in the second half of the season, two separate knockout stages and a showpiece Lord's final should ensure a happy debut for Royal London.

For those taking part, there is the added incentive to demonstrate international-class prowess before next winter's World Cup in Australia.

Yes, there is always an England 'angle'.

But county cricket has tales of its own to tell, and 2014 is its chance to prove it again.

David Clough is the Press Association's cricket reporter.

Consistency is the key for Mitchell's men

CONSISTENCY will be key to Worcestershire's young squad being competitive during the 2014 campaign, according to New Road skipper Daryl Mitchell.

Following the winter departure of veteran seamer Alan Richardson – top wicket-taker last summer with 69 Championship victims – Mitchell is one of the few experienced players in the squad at the age of 30.

Alongside the likes of England t20 batsman Moeen Ali, Gareth Andrew and overseas signing Saeed Aijmal, Mitchell will hope to inspire mature performances out of Worcestershire's crop of up-and-coming youngsters.

The homegrown opening batsman saw encouraging signs from his players at various times last season, but wants them to deliver on a consistent basis this term.

Approaching his tenth season as a first-team player, Mitchell said ahead of his side's season opener against Hampshire at The Ageas Bowl: "I think we showed what we are capable of last season.

"It's a case of performing to that level week in, week out, simple as that.

"We didn't do it enough last year and that's something we will be striving to do.

"There were some highs, but too many lows for my liking and we need to find a formula that can be a little bit more consistent this time.

"The more you play, the more experience you get and the more consistent you become.

"But I don't think we can keep hiding from the fact we are a young side.

"These young players need to start producing. There are a lot of guys now who have played a fair amount of first-class and list 'A' cricket."

Richardson will certainly be missed this year – his tally of 69 Championship wickets was more than double the next highest at the club (Jack Shantry's 34).

Ali, however, could be playing at The Ageas Bowl after appearing for England in their dismal t20 World Cup campaign which ended in abject humiliation earlier this week.

Ali was the Championship's leading run-

scorer last summer with 1,375, including four hundreds and eight fifties.

Worcestershire ended last season fifth in the second tier, one place and four points adrift of Hampshire.

Jimmy Adams' men had the best of their tussles in 2013, though.

Adams scored 219 as Hampshire piled up 500-9 en route to an innings win at The Ageas Bowl in April, while James Vince compiled a century when Hampshire amassed 428 in the first innings of a draw at New Road in September.

The Pears will arrive at The Ageas Bowl having failed to win any of their warm-up matches in England.

They completed their preparations for the new season with a disappointing 65-run defeat against Glamorgan on Tuesday.

Having dismissed the visitors for 145, Worcestershire slumped to a dismal 80 all out in the 28th over.

Worcestershire previously drew their three-day clash at Somerset and lost by seven wickets to Gloucestershire in a 50-over contest.

That was followed by a rain-ruined three-day match against Gloucestershire at Bristol when the New Road side were trailing by 147 runs at the end of the second day.

Isle of Wight-born Chris Russell recorded figures of 4-48 against Glamorgan this week to put himself in line for a start at Hampshire.



TOP RUNSCORER: Moeen Ali pictured playing for England in the t20 World Cup.

from page 14

1985: Middlesex (8)
Runs: D Randall (Notts)1,977
Wkts: Neal Radford (Worcs)100

1986: Essex
Runs Graeme Hick (Worcs) ...1,934
Courtney Walsh (Gloucs)118

1987: Nottinghamshire
Runs Graeme Hick (Worcs) ...1,868
Neal Radford (Worcs)109

1988: Worcestershire
Runs Graeme Hick (Worcs) ...2,443
Franklyn Stephenson (Notts) ...121

1989: Worcestershire
Runs Jimmy Cook (Somerset) 2,173
Franklyn Stephenson (Notts) ...91

1990: Middlesex
Runs Jimmy Cook (Somerset) 2,432
Neil Foster (Essex)94

1991: Essex
Runs Jimmy Cook (Somerset) 2,370
Waqar Younis (Surrey)113

1992: Essex (6)
Runs Mike Gatting (Middlesex) 1,980
Courtney Walsh (Gloucs)92

1993: Middlesex
Runs Bill Athey (Sussex) ...1,432
Mushtaq (Somerset)85

1994: Warwickshire
Runs Brian Lara (Warwicks) ...2,066
Courtney Walsh (Gloucs)89

1995: Warwickshire
Runs M Ramprakash (Midd) 2,147
Anil Kumble (Northants)105

1996: Leicestershire
Runs Graham Gooch (Essex) ...1,944
Courtney Walsh (Gloucs)85

1997: Glamorgan
Runs Steve James (Glam) ...1,605
Mike Smith (Gloucs)78

1998: Leicestershire
Runs John Crawley (Lancs) ...1,681
Courtney Walsh (Gloucs)106

1999: Surrey
Runs Stuart Law (Essex) ...1,833
Alamgir Sheryar (Worcs)86

2000: Surrey
Runs D Lehmann (Yorkshire) 1,477
Glenn McGrath (Worcs)76

2001: Yorkshire
Runs M Hussey (Northants) ...2,055
James Kirtley (Sussex)75

2002: Surrey
Runs Ian Ward (Surrey) ...1,708
Kevin Dean (Derbyshire)80

2003: Sussex
Runs Stuart Law (Lancashire) 1,820
Mushtaq Ahmed (Sussex)103

2004: Warwickshire
Runs Brad Hodge (Leics) ...1,548
Mushtaq Ahmed (Sussex)82

2005: Nottinghamshire
Runs Ed Joyce (Middlesex) ...1,668
Mushtaq Ahmed (Sussex)80

2006: Sussex
Runs M Ramprakash (Surrey) 2,211
Mushtaq (Sussex)102

2007: Sussex
Runs M Ramprakash (Surrey) 2,026
Mushtaq Ahmed (Sussex)90

2008: Durham
Runs M Goodwin (Sussex) ...1,343
J Tomlinson (Hampshire)67

2009: Durham
Runs M Trescothick (Som) ...1,817
Danish Kaneria (Essex)75

2010: Nottinghamshire
Runs M Ramprakash (Surrey) 1,595
Andre Adams (Notts)68

2011: Lancashire
Runs M Trescothick (Som) ...1,673
David Masters (Essex)93

2012: Warwickshire
Runs Nick Compton (Som) ...1,191
Graham Onions (Durham)64

2013: Durham

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight

Tomlinson excited by Barber potential

JAMES Tomlinson is genuinely excited by the talent of fellow left-arm Tom Barber.

The retirement of Dimi Mascarenhas means Tomlinson is now Hampshire's most experienced bowler, **writes SIMON WALTER.**

And the 31-year-old is effusive in his praise of the latest talent to come off Hampshire's production line.

He said: "I enjoy helping every bowler who's got something about them and Tom's a lovely left-arm bowler with a lot going for him."

"He's tall, he's quick, he bowls with a lovely rhythm and seems very switched on about his cricket so I'm very excited for him."

"There's plenty of time for him to develop; in a couple of years he could be a real force."

It does not seem that long ago that Tomlinson was a 19-year-old preparing for his first full season on the Hampshire staff.

"It's amazing, it goes very quickly," he continues. "He'll have his setbacks along the way, every bowler does, but he has all the attributes you need to be successful."

"He's quicker than I was at that age and being a left-armer always helps. He only needs to swing it a little, which he can do as he's got a good seam position."

"When you watch him bowl it looks easy, he's got a lovely run up, he gets pace from a very good running style."

"He's had his injury problems but he's worked hard on a couple of technical things which is hard to do."

"He just needs time in the 2nds to get overs under his belt and a period of cricket where he doesn't get injured."

"If he gets that he'll be fine."

With 53 wickets at 24 apiece, Tomlinson was comfortably Hampshire's best bowler last season.

"You get the same excitement before every season and I'm very clear about what I need to do this year," he said.

"If I do what I did last year, I'll be very pleased. I'm looking forward to helping the others, my job is to do the hard yards by supporting them and battling away."

"With Matt Coles, Kyle Abbott when he comes over and Chris Wood when his knee's better, we've got enough bowlers to do well."

"We'll get bland wickets again but we've got the attack to grind down the opposition and get 20 wickets."

Tomlinson is also excited by Hampshire's mix of youth and experience.

"I love the fact that Vincey's vice captain," he said. "We've got a group of youngsters leading the team and the older players are very level headed and easy to get on with."

"It's a really good balance. Dawson, Briggs, Vince, Coles, Wheeler and plenty of others can shape this team, they're only 23-24 with a long career head of them."

Pace ace puts Uni on hold

TOM Barber has put his university education on hold so he can continue his cricket education with Hampshire.

The pace prodigy is also an academic talent, but has shelved plans to study for a chemistry degree so he can concentrate on making the grade as a first-class cricketer.

"Originally I wanted to do chemistry at uni and then go into research, but you don't get many chances as a cricketer so I'll concentrate on my cricket," he said.

After signing a two-year development contract, Barber may well make his first-team debut at some stage this season.

"I'll certainly push for a place by bowling for the 2nds and the academy; hopefully I can push my name forward," he said.

"The ball's coming out with good pace and accuracy. Things I was working on over the winter are evident in my bowling at the moment and maintaining that throughout the season is the aim."

Barber, who comes from Bournemouth, came to Hampshire's attention after taking six wickets in an under-16 match for Dorset against Hampshire at Burridge CC.

"Tony Middleton had a word and it went from there," he explains. Barber is in digs with wicketkeeper-batsman Lewis McManus, another Dorset talent on a two-year development contract, in West End.

It makes it easy to practise at The Ageas Bowl, where experienced left-armers James Tomlinson has been a big help.

"Tomo's taken me under his wing, I can always go to him for advice," he continues. "I can swing the ball into the right-hander - with a bit of natural variation when I don't quite get my wrist right and it goes across - and I've got a good bouncer as well which is quite important too as a fast bowler."

"I was clocked at 85mph last year but I'm definitely quicker this year, I'm a lot stronger for being in the gym."

"Tomo's best advice has been to keep it simple, doing the basics well is a big part of it."

"And we've talked about how when the ball isn't swinging the batsman will just stand on off stump and leave all day."

"Then there's only one mode of dismissal, a nick to the keeper. So what I would do then is come round the wicket so 'bowled' and 'lbw' come into the equation as well."

PROMISING: Tom Barber in England youth action.

Non-league Football

Hill's trying to enjoy the ride

RICHARD Hill is urging those outside the Eastleigh dressing room to embrace the club's most successful ever season rather than wish it away.

Following Tuesday's 2-2 result at Bishops Stortford, the Spitfires went into today's home game against Whitehawk in the promising position of being three points clear at the top of the Skrill Conference South with a game in hand over Bromley.

But having watched his team draw their last three away matches – all decent results in the grand scheme of things – Hill gets the feeling that, for many people, the finishing line can't come quickly enough.

With the title and automatic promotion at stake, Hill fully understands the anxiety, saying: "People don't want to go through the mill, the same as I have to go through every game."

But, nerve-jangling or not, he feels these are great times for the Stoneham Lane club that should be enjoyed to the max.

"Seasons like this don't come along very often and, no disrespect to clubs

Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

like Basingstoke, but it's far better to be in our position with something to play for than just seeing the season out," he said.

"We mustn't wish the season away.

"We need to keep our feet on the ground and not to panic or get carried away wanting it all to be over."

Given the number of away games Eastleigh are currently having to contend with, it was perhaps inevitable that their progress through this tricky period would be steady rather than spectacular.

The Bishops Stortford trip was their fourth on the road out of the last five games and, following today's home clash with Whitehawk, they are back on their travels to title rivals Bromley on Tuesday and Chelmsford City next Saturday.

"I sat down with (secretary) Ray Murphy and said I didn't want to play three away games on the spin and we've managed to avoid that," said Hill.

"But we knew we were coming into a run of six away games and two at home and they're all tough.

"Prior to Dorchester at home, we were at Whitehawk and Staines which are not easy places to go.

"Plus we had to play Bishop's Stortford 48 hours after a Sunday game at Hayes & Yeading.

"Now we've got Whitehawk (home, today), Bromley and Chelmsford coming up and they will be tough too because they've all got something to play for.

"I made a statement at the start of the season that we would try and win every game. But I'm at a point now where, if we've got a point with 15 minutes to go, I'll try and keep that point – especially if information's coming in that (third-placed) Sutton and Bromley are drawing or losing.

"When we had 13 games to go, I set the fellas a target and we're still on course to achieve it.

"We know what the target is and we'll see how many points we end up with.

"We've just got to finish as strong as we can and we'll see where we are at Easter."

RICHARD HILL



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Monday, April 7

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Tottenham v Sunderland.

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South: Havant & Waterlooville v Maidenhead.

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: Hitchin v Hungerford.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Christchurch v Bournemouth Poppies.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: Baffins Milton Rovers v Headley Utd, Paulsgrove v Fleetlands, QK Southampton v Colden Common.

WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE

Premier Division: Winchester City v AFC Totton.

Tuesday, April 8

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-Final - Second Leg: Borussia Dortmund v Real Madrid, Chelsea v PSG.

SKY BET LEAGUE

Championship: Barnsley v Burnley, Blackburn v QPR, Blackpool v Derby, Bournemouth v Reading, Charlton v Yeovil, Doncaster v Bolton, Huddersfield v Ipswich, Leicester v Brighton, Middlesbrough v Birmingham, Nottm Forest v Sheff Wed, Watford v Leeds, Wigan v Millwall.

League 1: Brentford v Crawley Town, Peterborough v Gillingham, Sheff Utd v Rotherham.

League 2: Newport County v Plymouth.

SKRILL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Premier: Alfreton Town v Aldershot, Braintree Town v Macclesfield, Forest Green v Kidderminster, Grimsby v Woking, Hyde v Salisbury, Luton v Tamworth, Southport v Barnet, Welling v Hereford.

South: Basingstoke v Chelmsford, Bromley v Eastleigh, Concord v Tonbridge Angels.

Farnborough v Bishops Stortford, Gosport Borough v Hayes & Yeading, Staines v Whitehawk.

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Totton v Redditch, Banbury v Biggleswade, Baskley v Cambridge City, Turo v Weymouth.

Division One South & West: Bishops Cleeve v Taunton, Mangotsfield v Hyde Water, North Leigh v Fleet Town, Paulton Rovers v Godalming, Shortwood v Cirencester.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Brockenhurst v Sholing, Fareham v Lynton, Fawley v Portsmouth, Moneyfields v Verwood.

Division One: Hayling Utd v Team Solent, Laverstock & Ford v Petersfield, US Portsmouth v East Cowes Vics.

NORTH HANTS SENIOR CUP FINAL

Alresford Town v Whitchurch (at Andover New Street FC)

DORSET SENIOR CUP FINAL

Hamworthy Utd v Poole Town (at Wimborne Town FC)

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Stoneham v Otterbourne, Locks Heath v Clanfield.

Division One: Hamble Club v Lyndhurst, Infinity v Broughton.

Combination: Fleetlands v Liss Athletic.

WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE

Premier Division: Dorchester v Moneyfields.

SKRILL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Division One East: Tadley Calvea v Horndean.

Division One West: Christchurch v Verwood.

Wednesday, April 9

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-Final - Second Leg: Atletico Madrid v Barcelona, Bayern Munich v Man Utd.

SKRILL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

South: Boreham Wood v Eastbourne Borough.

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: Guildford City v Stratford.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Division One: Amesbury v Tadley Calvea.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Aldermaston v Bournemouth Sports, Fleetlands v Liss Athletic, Hedge End Rovers v Colden Common, Winchester Castle v Baffins Milton Rovers.

Combination: Liphook v Clanfield, Michelmersh v Tinsbury v Hamble Club, Otterbourne v Overton.

WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE

Division One East: Alton v Colden Common, Newport IoW v US Portsmouth, Petersfield v Alresford.

Division One West: Hythe & Dibden v Laverstock & Ford, Fawley AFC v East Cowes Vics.

Wyvern Shield, Knockout phase, quarter-final: Sholing v AFC Portchester.

Thursday, April 10

UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE

Quarter-Final - Second Leg: Benfica v AZ, Juventus v Lyon, Sevilla v FC Porto, Valencia v Basle.

SKRILL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Premier: Dartford v Grimsby, Woking v Cambridge

Utd.

South: Bishops Stortford v Chelmsford, Maidenhead v Concord, Tonbridge Angels v Dover.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Fareham v Verwood, Newport IoW v Sholing, Whitchurch v Moneyfields.

Division One: US Portsmouth v Ringwood Town.

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: Biggleswade v Hitchin, Hungerford v Poole.

WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE

Division One West: Romsey Town v Christchurch.

Friday, April 11

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: Bishops Cleeve v Evesham.

Saturday, April 12

FA CUP

Semi-Final: Wigan v Arsenal (Wembley Stadium).

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

Crystal Palace v Aston Villa, Fulham v Norwich, Southampton v Cardiff, Stoke v Newcastle, Sunderland v Everton, West Brom v Spurs.

SKY BET LEAGUE

Championship: Bolton v Barnsley, Brighton v Charlton, Burnley v Middlesbrough, Derby v Huddersfield, Ipswich v Doncaster, Leeds v Blackpool, Millwall v Watford, QPR v Nottm Forest, Sheff Wed v Blackburn, Yeovil v Bournemouth.

League 1: Crewe v Wolverhampton, Leyton Orient v Gillingham, Milton Keynes Dons v Crawley Town, Notts County v Port Vale, Peterborough v Coventry, Preston v Carlisle, Stevenage v Colchester, Swindon v Brentford, Tranmere v Shrewsbury, Walsall v Bristol City.

League 2: Bristol Rovers v Torquay, Dag & Red v Portsmouth, Exeter v Cheltenham, Fleetwood Town v Morecambe, Hartlepool v Chesterfield, Mansfield v Rochdale, Newport County v Wycombe, Northampton v Burton Albion, Plymouth v Oxford Utd, Scunthorpe v Bury, Southend v AFC Wimbledon, York v Accrington Stanley.

SKRILL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Premier: Barnet v FC Halifax, Cambridge Utd v Hyde, Dartford v Forest Green, Grimsby v Chester FC, Hereford v Gateshead, Kidderminster v Welling, Luton v Braintree Town, Macclesfield v Aldershot, Salisbury v Lincoln City, Southport v Tamworth, Woking v Alfreton Town, Wrexham v Nuneaton.

South: Basingstoke v Bishops Stortford, Bath City v Hayes & Yeading, Boreham Wood v Whitehawk, Bromley v Weston-super-Mare, Chelmsford v Eastleigh, Dorchester v Farnborough, Dover v Staines, Eastbourne v Gosport Borough, Havant &

Waterlooville v Concord, Maidenhead v Tonbridge Angels, Sutton v Ebbsfleet.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Andover New Street v Hayling Utd, Fleet Spurs v Ringwood, Hythe & Dibden v Andover Town, Petersfield v Cowes Sports, Tadley Calvea v East Cowes Vics, Team Solent v Pewsey Vale, US Portsmouth v New Milton.

CALOR SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: Anesey v Redditch, Baskley v Biggleswade, Bedford v Truro, Bideford v Chesham, Burnham v Corby, Cambridge City v Frome, Chippenham v Banbury, Hemel Hempstead v Hitchin, St Albans v Poole, Stourbridge v AFC Totton Weymouth v St Neots.

Division One South & West: Cirencester v Cinderford, Clevedon v Tiverton, Didcot v Godalming, Fleet Town v Shortwood, Guildford v North Leigh, Ringwood v Yate Town, Paulton Rovers v Bridgwater, Stratford v Swindon Supermarine, Taunton v Mangotsfield, Wiltborne v Thatcham.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Stoneham v Liphook, Bournemouth Sports v Baffins Milton Rovers, Headley Utd v Fleetlands, Hedge End Rovers v AFC Aldermaston, Liss v Paulsgrove, Overton v Colden Common, QK Southampton v Locks Heath.

Division One: Andover Lions v Bush Hill, Broughton v Hamble Club, Infinity v Lyndhurst, Michelmersh & Tinsbury v Upham.

Combination: Clanfield v Hedge End Rovers, Fleetlands v Overton, Hamble Club v Liphook, Otterbourne v AFC Stoneham, Winchester Castle v Paulsgrove.

WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Totton v Moneyfields, Sholing v Bampton H.H.

Division One East: Folland Sports v Petersfield, Locks Heath v Tadley Calvea.

Division One West: Christchurch v Hythe & Dibden, Fawley AFC v Verwood, Laverstock & Ford v East Cowes Vics.

Wyvern Shield, Knockout quarter-final: Colden Common v Horndean.

Wyvern Shield, League phase: C. Ringwood v Alton Town.

Non-league Football

Non-league News

The old magic's still there for McGregor

DOWNTON boss Jeff Softley hailed super striker Declan McGregor for inspiring basement boys Downton to a rare win at fellow strugglers Romsey Town last Saturday.

The former Salisbury City marksman was the stand-out performer as the Robins celebrated their first Sydenhams Premier victory after a 21-match wait.

Having gone behind early on, Downton showed great courage to peg back the deficit thanks to goals from McGregor, Jamie Waters, Craig Lewis and Martin Johnson and eventually run out 4-2 winners.

"We were amazing in the second half," smiled Softley.

"Whenever Declan's in the changing room the atmosphere changes as the boys believe they can win when he's up front."

"He's not only a class act but he's a nice, funny man off the pitch. His banter is brilliant."

"Due to commitments elsewhere, he's missed 14 games this season, but hopefully we'll have him for the remaining four games."

"For the first time all season I could fill my bench and I actually had a selection headache."

"That is something I want every week, not just occasionally."

Marketing whizz is on board at Town

SIMON Hood is joining Basingstoke Town's senior management team as head of marketing.

Hood, named North Hampshire Inspire Young Business Person of the Year in November, will work with Town's board of directors to raise the profile of the Skril Conference South club and seek out new commercial opportunities.

It is not his first foray into the world of football – he is currently part of the Dons Trust for League Two outfit AFC Wimbledon.

Hood – chairman of the Hampshire Chartered Institute of Marketing – said: "I am very excited about working with Basingstoke Town and am looking forward to helping the club to think in a more commercial way."

"It's a challenge because sport is too much of a game to be a business and too much of a business to be a game."

"Without doubt, our key objective is to create a club that is self-sufficient and at the heart of this community."

Welcoming Hood to the Camrose, Basingstoke chairman Rafi Razzak said: "He is a very high calibre individual who brings youthful enthusiasm to our set-up."

Kneller is the man for a crisis



MR VERSATILE:
Ben Kneller filled in as goalkeeper for Folland last weekend.



Wendy Gee

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

FOLLAND Sports boss Danny Bowers says he wouldn't hesitate for one minute to play Ben Kneller in goal again.

With regular No1 Ryan Gosney suspended and his understudy Sam Scrase on holiday, Kneller competently filled in between the sticks for successive victories over Fareham (5-1) and Bournemouth Poppies (6-0) as the Planemakers continued their breathtaking rise up the Sydenhams Premier Division.

Nothing remarkable about that, you might think...except that former Eastleigh and Winchester City man is actually a centre forward!

Bowers covered for Gosney and Scrase's absence by signing former Sholing stopper Scott O'Rourke following his departure from Brockenhurst.

But, after one appearance against Romsey, O'Rourke's work commitments got in the way.

With no other senior 'keeper available, he turned to the multi-talented Kneller having seen him play in goal for Hamble Club.

"I watched the Southampton

Senior Cup semi-final against Sholing Reserves and Ben did well," he said.

"I was still a bit nervous putting him in against Fareham and Ben apologised afterwards for the goal we conceded, but it wasn't his fault."

"Ben's kicking is fantastic and every time he kicked the ball I thought we were going to score."

"He's such a good talker and it was like he was playing sweeper."

"He kicked the ball like an arrow landing on a penny and it reminded me of (former Eastleigh 'keeper) Wayne Shaw."

"He's a great shot-stopper too and if Gos was ever out again I'd have no hesitation asking Ben to play in goal."

"I've always known Ben as a centre-forward – and a very good one too – but he's one of those lads who can play anywhere."

"But it's not every day you find someone who can score goals at one end and keep them out at

the other!"

With his three-match suspension over, Gosney returned for Tuesday's 3-0 victory at Totton & Eling which tightened Follands' grip on third spot.

"Ben made a fantastic save at 1-0 at Bournemouth on Saturday and said afterwards: "You won't be putting Gos back in on Tuesday, will you? I've kept a clean sheet, I should stay in," smiled Bowers."

"I said I'd get back to him on that one!"

Kneller himself took to Twitter during Tuesday's game to ask "@FollandsHamble how's my understudy doing?"

The Totton & Eling win was Follands' seventh on the bounce, moving them five points clear of Winchester City in the tussle for third spot.

"We've got a great opportunity to finish third now," said Bowers, pictured left.

"Newport have got

games in hand and could overtake us, but they've got a massive run-in."

"Winchester have got the best run-in there is, whereas we've got a tough one with Alresford (today), Horndean, Sholing and Bemerton to play."

"But our lads keep getting through every challenge we set them and they keep stepping up to the plate and achieving it."

Jamie Barron is on 24 goals now and I think there's a private battle going on between him and Ryan Long who's got about 31.

"The partnership between them is unbelievable and it was nice to see Mike Turvey getting back on the scoresheet at Totton, along with Richard Gregory who was making his first start in a month."

With James Roden away, Tuesday also marked a welcome return for defender Iain Calder, playing his first game for three months after toe and ankle problems.

"I was concerned about losing Monkey (Roden) because he'd been playing at the back for 13 games which coincided with our unbeaten run," said Bowers.

"We had (dual-signed Eastleigh full-back) Ryan Fuller out as well with an ankle injury, but Pip Nolan went to right-back and Iain came in and did a really good job."



MORE NON-LEAGUE NEW ONLINE: WWW.DAILYECHO.CO.UK

Non-league Football

FAWLEY BOSS: BEN ISN'T GUILTY



COLIN Lane insists there is no way Fawley AFC's 'Mr Placid' was guilty of an elbow offence at Moneyfields last Saturday.

Young Oiler Ben Bolton was sent off after just 30 minutes at Dover Road having gone up for an aerial challenge with Moneys' Jack Lee.

The referee brandished a straight red but Fawley boss Lane, pictured above, who got a clear view of the incident, felt his player was hard done by.

He said: "Ben Bolton is one of the most laid-back, placid lads you've ever met in your life and elbowing someone is not in his nature."

"He's only about 22 and has broken into our first team this year."

Now he's going to get a three-match suspension and a £50 fine for violent conduct.

"If any of my players were guilty of an elbow offence, I would come out and say so, but

Wendy Gee

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

no way in the world did Ben elbow the lad.

"He went up for the header with the other lad when Moneyfields were attacking and they were both near enough stationary when they jumped."

"Your elbow's got to be flying to get sent off and that was never the case."

Despite that set-back, Fawley's ten men managed to come away with a priceless Sydenhams Premier point to aid their battle against relegation.

After falling behind to a contentious goal by Rob Evans, scored with Fawley looking for in vain a foul by Warren Hunt on goalkeeper Dan Loader, the Oilers hit back with a Ben Murphy equaliser with five minutes remaining.

Fawley, though, undid Saturday's good work with what

Lane described as a "lethargic" 2-1 defeat at Christchurch on Wednesday.

With Priory also struggling this term, the Oilers boss was hoping for a decent points return from that game and today's basement showdown with rock-bottom Downton.

But having wiped out Priory's opener through Pete Keating, they were undone by a free-kick from the edge of the box.

"The award of the free-kick was a bit dubious, but I'm not going to complain because we were poor," said Lane.

"I was disappointed with our laid-back, lethargic attitude. We didn't perform as we should have done considering we're in a relegation battle."

Still with games in hand over their fellow strugglers, the Oilers remain in the strongest position to beat the drop.

But Lane admitted: "We've put a bit of pressure on ourselves now and given Downton and Romsey a glimmer of hope."

ous ailments on and off the field of play.

"Hopefully Phil will still be a Hawk when he celebrates match number 2,000."

Ashwell said: "I want to thank all the fans for the fantastic support and lovely messages I have received."

"I hope I will be able to continue my career at this

great club.

"Thanks go to Derek Pope and the board, Lee Bradbury, Shaun Gale, Mick Jenkins, Billy Gilbert - who brought me to the club from Waterlooville way back in 1998 - Dave Leworthy, Liam Daish, Mick Jenkins, Ian Baird to name a few managers I have worked with."

Former Pompey ace Igoe leaves Gosport

GOSPORT Borough's Sammy Igoe has joined injury-hit Bognor Regis Town on loan.

The 38-year-old former Portsmouth and AFC Bournemouth midfielder is part of the 'fall out' from Borough's FA Trophy final appearance at Wembley.

Some players are understood to have been unhappy about being

named on the bench - or, in Igoe's case, left out of Alex Pike's 16 entirely.

In Borough's defence, Igoe had been struggling with an ankle injury prior to the final and had had minimal game time.

"I have a large squad of 20 players and picking 16 for Wembley wasn't easy," admitted manager Pike, pictured.

"I picked the strongest team I could and I had to be fair.

"There has been some fall-out from that and a bit of an atmosphere.

"I have been a bit disappointed by some players' attitudes.

"But Sammy's an honest character

who has played for a lot of better clubs than Gosport.

"Maybe he didn't handle it in the model professional way but he has done brilliantly for the club."

Igoe made an instant impact for the Rocks last Saturday, earning the man-of-the-match award.

He set up the first two goals in Bognor's 3-2 home win over Harrow Borough which kept them firmly in the Ryman Premier promotion hunt.

Discussing the situation, Igoe said: "I'd played at Wembley before but I was a bit upset I didn't even make the bench considering I was the most senior player in the squad and had that experience."

"I did vent my frustra-

tions to him (Pike) that I wasn't involved and I couldn't get my head around it.

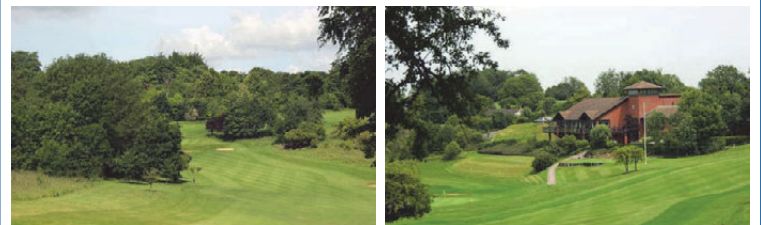
"It's up to them if they want to resign me in the summer. I haven't played my last game for Gosport Borough - not in my eyes anyway."



ROYAL WINCHESTER GOLF CLUB

New Membership Open Day

Sunday 6th April 2014



WE HAVE A LIMITED NUMBER OF VACANCIES FOR 7 DAY, 5 DAY, INTERMEDIATE (18 - 30) AND JUNIOR MEMBERSHIPS. YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US ON OUR OPEN DAY AND EXPERIENCE WHAT THIS FRIENDLY AND VERY SOCIABLE MEMBERS' CLUB HAS TO OFFER?

For more details of the Club visit our website at www.royalwinchestergolfclub.com

The day includes:

- 18 holes of golf (bookings available between 11.00 and 14.00)
- Drink and a light snack on arrival prior to 18 holes of golf
- The opportunity to meet and talk to committee members and staff about the Club and what membership of Royal Winchester can provide

If you wish to join us on the day please call Steve in the Professional Shop on **01962 862473** or call Andrew or Lynne in the Office on **01962 852462** or email the club at manager@royalwinchestergolfclub.com to reserve your time.

We look forward to seeing you on the day!!

'Sponge man' soaks it all up

LAST Saturday marked a milestone occasion for Havant & Waterlooville's trusty 'sponge man' Phil Ashwell.

Hawks' 0-0 Conference South draw at Chelmsford City marked the physio's 1,500th game on duty over a 25 years.

An H&W statement said:

"The club would like to thank Phil for his continued superb, first-class medical service as he celebrates his 1,500th start."

"Phil started at Portsmouth 'a few years' ago and has been a familiar sight around the area and has used his time and knowledge to help numer-

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Joyce to take a break

WEYMOUTH'S former Salisbury City striker Ben Joyce has been ruled out for the rest of the Calor Southern Premier season.

Joyce, right, has been troubled by shin splints over the past few months and has been told by doctors not to take to the field again this term.

"It's obviously very frustrating for Ben because he just wants to play and help us pick up as many points as we can until the end of the season," said Terras boss Jason Matthews.



Duo are moving on up

CHRISTCHURCH have elevated experienced squad members Mark Smith and Gareth Barnes to a player-coach role.

Michael Cuffie, manager of the Sydenhams Premier Division strugglers, explained: "Both lads have a wealth of knowledge to pass on to what is a very young group of players."

"That is the direction we have to move in."

Bob Sullivan's role as assistant manager remains unchanged.

Best of the season

GRAHAM Kemp hailed Hamworthy's 3-1 triumph at AFC Portchester on Tuesday "our best all-round performance of the season".

Ben Osborne struck twice to put the visitors 2-0 up in the second half before Portchester pulled a goal back.

Micky Hubbard made sure of Sydenhams Premier victory with a long-range lob in the closing stages.

"We were really exceptional," smiled Kemp, pictured above.



Doswell nets award

FORMER Eastleigh boss Paul Doswell has been named Skril Conference South manager-of-the-month for March.

It completes an unprecedented hat-trick for the Sutton United manager who also got his hands on the January and February trophies.

Doswell left the judges with little option having led his side on an unbeaten start to 2014, including a win at promotion rivals Bromley when the Us came back from behind to triumph 4-2.

Third-placed Sutton also scooped the players' player prize for March courtesy of Canadian-born striker Gavin McCallum.

Totton's members vote to sell off Testwood Stadium

Wendy Gee

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

AFC TOTTON have voted to sell their Testwood Stadium ground in order to clear their mountain of debt.

Two proposals were put to the membership at a full members' meeting on Thursday night and the vote went unanimously in favour of finalising a deal with one or other of the interested parties.

Since selling their run-down, old Testwood Park home and moving to a brand new, purpose-built £2.9m stadium in Salisbury Road in February 2011, the Stags have struggled to keep their heads above water financially.

The cost of utility bills has been crippling and things came to a head towards the end of last season when it emerged that the 128-year-old club were some £200,000 in debt.

The top priority this term was to pay the money owed to last season's playing staff but, having just experienced one of the wettest winters on record which forced several postponements, chairman Andy Straker, pictured below, admitted:

"The debt is still substantial and has not come down as much as we wanted."

"There were two propositions put forward, both involving the sale of ground to clear the debt and to leave us with money to kick off next season in the Southern



FOR SALE: The main stand at AFC Totton's Testwood Stadium.

League with a playing budget."

Back in January, Totton confirmed they were in preliminary talks to sell the ground to Totton College and rent it back.

But it is understood that, due to government cutbacks, the college could not finance the deal.

Straker was unable to confirm the identity of either party now interested in buying the ground, but said: "The members voted in preference of one over the other and we hope to take that forward in the next couple of weeks, negotiating

price, rent and so on and sorting out the legal side."

Until recently Totton's membership had been loath to sell the ground but Straker said: "They've realised it's one of the only options left."

"The fact is that we still owe money and we have to pay it. The quicker we can pay the players, the better. They've waited far too long."

But he stressed: "Selling the ground is about more than just buying us time, it's about making sure the club thrives. We'll tie the new

owners down to a lease to keep us here for the foreseeable future and make sure we survive as a football club. The average supporter won't see a difference."

"We will remain a members' club and we believe we can cover our debts going forward and put money into the team. It's not just about us selling the ground and becoming a tenant. The interested buyers want to assist the club and help take it forward."

"Finally there's an end to what's been horrible time for the club."

Downton defeat hits Romsey's survival bid

A DAMAGING 4-2 home defeat by Downton was the second of a painful double blow for Romsey Town.

Prior to losing last Saturday's do-or-die Sydenhams Premier basement battle, the Bypass boys had been rocked by the departure of first-choice right-back Ryan Lambert.

Having played against Follands the previous week, former Sholing reserves regular Lambert suddenly left the club with just four league games remaining, saying he wasn't enjoying his football.

Prior to his departure, the 23-year-old had been a mainstay of the Romsey side this term, making 37 Wessex starts and scoring five goals.

Mystified Town co-boss John McFarlane said: "Ryan told us he

wasn't enjoying his football. It was a shame to see him go with just four games remaining and we could certainly have done without losing our first-choice right-back at this stage."

"Ryan was always there at training and it's disappointing he's gone."

Lambert's ill-timed exit was the forerunner to a dismal weekend for Romsey.

Had Town beaten Downton, they would have given themselves a flicker of a chance of escaping the relegation trap door – and almost certainly condemned the Robins to crashing through it.

But having bossed the opening half-hour and taken the lead through full-back Josh Green, they lost their way in the latter stages of the first half and were pegged

back 1-1 at half-time.

Downton then took the lead before Green struck again from the penalty spot.

But it was a successfully converted penalty at the other end that ultimately proved Romsey's undoing.

Ross Gregory conceded it at the expense of a red card and the ten men were undone by a fourth Downton goal late on.

Given Romsey's improvement since the arrival of McFarlane and coach Tom Barge from Blackfield & Langley, it was a hammer blow the co-boss hadn't seen coming.

"I'm hugely disappointed," McFarlane confessed. "With the way we've changed things lately and the reaction of the players, it was all shaping up for a really good performance."

"We were good for the first half-hour, but then players started playing individually, we lost our discipline and allowed them back in."

"I could see the signs and thought that if we could get to half-time at 1-0 and refocus we could go out strong again for the second half."

"But Downton's equaliser gave them the confidence they needed. It's going to be a tough ask now and we're relying on other things to go our way."

"But we'll keep going and won't stop until it's confirmed one way or the other."

Romsey received a glimmer of hope on Wednesday when fellow strugglers Fawley AFC missed their chance to edge away from the bottom two when beaten 2-1 at Christchurch.



RYAN LAMBERT

Non-league Football



Salisbury City pack out the Ray Mac

ALL the hard work paid dividends for Salisbury City last Saturday as their mission of attracting 2,000 fans into the Ray Mac was accomplished.

The Skrill Conference Premier club enjoyed a season's best home attendance for the visit of Kidderminster Harriers as part of their 'Challenge 2000' initiative.

Manager Mikey Harris and his squad spent weeks visiting local schools and colleges with the goal of

attracting a season's best home crowd.

The result was a bumper 2,217 gate at the Raymond McEnhill Stadium who were served up an action-packed 1-1 draw complete with an ugly finale in which two red cards were dished out.

Kidderminster, chasing their first away win in five months, got their noses in front on 35 minutes through Callum Gittings.

They held onto that lead until second-half stoppage time when Charlie

Sheringham's penalty salvaged a priceless point for the Whites.

Kiddy skipper Kyle Storer handled inside the area and was dismissed in the aftermath for a spat with City defender Angus MacDonald, who departed with a ripped shirt.

Sheringham, watched by proud father Teddy, made no mistake from 12 yards to score his maiden goal since joining Salisbury on loan from AFC Wimbledon. Harris, who got right

behind the Challenge 2000 scheme in a bid to boost woeful attendances at Old Sarum, said: "It's been a really positive day all round."

"I'm delighted to hit the target of 2,000, and some more, and I'm sure those who came would have been entertained as there was plenty of match action."

"It was great to see so many smiling faces and hopefully it will work as a catalyst for the remaining home games and next sea-

son.

"A club's nothing without fans and if we can establish that fan base with the younger people of Salisbury then hopefully it'll continue to help the club progress over the next few years."

"We have plenty of kids in the Salisbury area and wanted to highlight that you don't need to go to Southampton, Portsmouth, Swindon or AFC Bournemouth as there's good football on your doorstep."

Non-league News

Jamal joins Frome

YOUNG Saints winger Jamal Branker has joined Calor Southern Premier outfit Frome Town on loan.

The 19-year-old, who is part of Southampton's development squad, put pen to paper for the Somerset outfit on transfer deadline day.

It is his second loan spell of the season in the Calor Premier Division, having previously spent time with Steve Riley's AFC Totton.

Branker – a right-sided player – has been with Saints since under-10 level and once scored nine goals in a youth match against Reading.

Borough fan boost

GOSPORT Borough continue to set records this season.

Having made an historic visit to Wembley in the FA Trophy final two weeks ago, Borough invited fans to 'Pay what you want' at Privett Park last Saturday as a thank you for their outstanding support along the 'March to the Arch'.

The club were rewarded with a record 1,010 home crowd for the visit of Bishop's Cleeve in the Skrill Conference South.

The feel-good factor of a bumper crowd on a sunny spring day certainly paid big dividends for Gosport who boosted their survival hopes with a 2-1 victory courtesy of ex-Saint Brett Poate's penalty and Dartford loanee Jason Prior's first goal for the club.

To add to the celebratory feel, it was the 54th birthday of boss Alex Pike, pictured above.

B&L snap up James

WELL-travelled Sydenhams Wessex campaigner James Embree has made Blackfield & Langley his latest port of call.

The full-back has joined Kev Gibbens's Watersiders having previously played for Romsey Town, Winchester City and, latterly, Totton & Eling and Lymington Town.

Ken's United raid

BOURNEMOUTH Poppies boss Ken Vaughan has made another signing from Sydenhams Premier Division neighbours Hamworthy United.

Striker Joe Shovelton has followed in the footsteps of Sam Pekun and Diane Bassiriki switching to Victoria Park from the County Ground.

Petersfield are 'like rabbits in the headlights'

IAN Saunders said his Petersfield Town team resembled "rabbits caught in headlights" during last Saturday's comprehensive 4-0 defeat by Sydenhams Division One leaders Andover Town.

It was the Love Lane outfit's first league loss of the season and, despite the severity of the scoreline, their promotion push is far from over.

But the Sydenhams League Cup finalists clearly have some improving to do before they travel to Andover's Portway Stadium for the return league clash on April 19.

Ex-Winchester City frontman Michael Dixon (2), Lewis Benson (pictured) and Oli Yates dealt



the killer blows on a torrid afternoon for Petersfield who ended the game with nine men after Jamie Ford and Phil Archbold had been dismissed for second yellows.

It left Town nine points clear of Petersfield, having played three games more, and cautious Portway boss Neil Benson said: "The title wasn't won or lost on Saturday as there are still four very important games to come."

"But we are very pleased to be close to the aim of this club which is, of course, promotion to the Premier Division."

Benson added: "Our squad was different class today and they knew their responsibilities. We had thoroughly prepared and seen Petersfield several times, so we knew what to expect."

Losing manager Saunders conceded: "Sometimes you have to hold your hand up and admit you were beaten by the better team."

"We ran out of steam and were put to the sword, but the promotion charge is still on."

Hussey: New chairman has steadied the ship at T&E

BOSS: Totton & Eling boss Stuart Hussey.



CO-MANAGER Stuart Hussey has hailed the influence of chairman Angus Steel at Totton & Eling.

It's been a tough season on and off the pitch at Millers Park – to the point where Hussey recently admitted that the club might be better off being relegated and regrouping in Sydenhams One.

But the Millers are on the brink of retaining their Wessex top-flight status thanks to a timely run of three wins from their last five league games.

With key players missing, T&E lost 3-0 at home to form side Folland Sports on Tuesday.

But they had already grabbed themselves a priceless lifeline last Saturday by bringing home three priceless points from a 1-0 victory at Whitchurch, where Jude Nwachukwu netted the winner.

Even allowing for the midweek hiccup, Hussey said: "We've had a great run and there would have to be something seriously wrong for us to go down now."

And he reckons the settling effect

Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER



of having Steel at the helm has played a big part in the dramatic turnaround. Steel, managing director of Winchester-based company Heat Your Home For Less Ltd, took over as chairman at the turn of the year.

"Since Angus came in we've gone back to being a football club with no politics," he said.

"There's a good atmosphere about the place."

"(Vice chairman/director of football) Andy Tipp promised to buy the whole squad and management a drink if we beat Whitchurch last Saturday – so that must have hit him hard in the pocket!" he smiled.

Last Saturday's win at Whitchurch was no mean achievement considering the Millers had four regulars out.

Centre-back Dean Faithfull will miss the rest of the season after landing a contract in Costa Rica, Ben Thompson and Matt Gray were

nursing tight hamstrings and Scott Gilham was working.

On Tuesday they lost Adam Lowther and Byron Gharibian to suspension. The Millers made a solid enough opening but were beaten by goals from Follands' Jamie Barron, Mike Turvey and Richard Gregory.

T&E had a chance to pull one back when Pip Nolan conceded a penalty, but Ryan Gosney saved well from Thompson.

Saluting the Millers' work ethic and organisation, Follands boss Danny Bowers said: "Totton worked our lads all night long and never gave up."

"You can see why they've pulled away from the teams at the bottom."

"They're better than the other teams down there that we've played."

"Totton set themselves up not to be beaten and to try and hurt us on the break. They stopped us playing, whereas the other teams have let us have a go at them."

"I think we beat Totton 5-1 at our place, but they've come a long way since then and they really got our players frustrated the other night."

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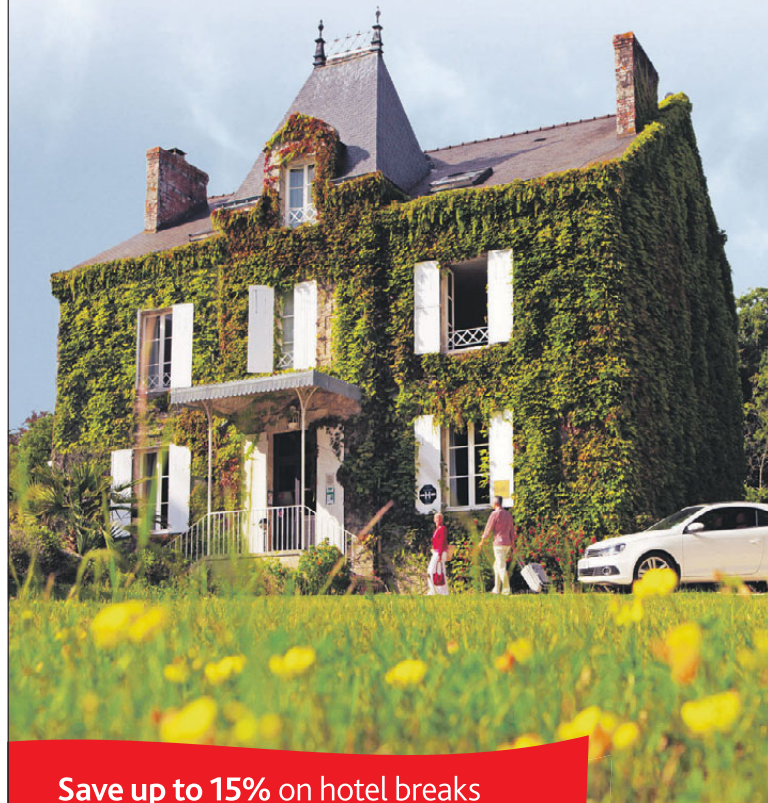
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Youth Football



WINNING LINE-UP: Back (from left): Tom Cawte, Matt Knibbs, Will Gailer, Hew Richards, Harry Weekes, Steven Fazackerley, Adam Redwood. Front: Mickey Locke, Josh Robinson, Ben Shafie, Tom Fripp, Alfie Whittingham, Phil Kendall.

Super Swans

TWELVE months on, Swanmore's youngsters have an opportunity to make up for the disappointment of losing last season's Hampshire Schools FA Under-15 County Cup final at Fratton Park.

Disappointingly, they were beaten 4-1 by Calthorpe Park – a flattering score-line in favour of the Fleet side on the night – but, a year on, the same group of players is set for another crack at the county silverware, writes *Mike Vimpany*.

A 2-1 midweek win over Testwood – a result they thoroughly deserved – has put Swanmore through to the Under-16 County final and a meet-up with Robert May's School, from Odiham.

Despite reaching last season's age-group final, Swanmore were arguably underdogs going into the semi-final with Testwood, who had blazed a trail to the last eight of the English Schools FA Under-16 Cup earlier this season.

But, if they were unfancied, it didn't show.

Testwood were dangerous from set-piece situations, but Swanmore played the better football throughout and the eventual 2-1 margin didn't really do their superiority justice.

AFC Bournemouth prospect Matt Worthington is normally the hub of the Testwood side, but though he scored and was ever dangerous from

Second chance of silverware for Swanmore's youngsters

free-kicks, he was generally shackled in midfield by Alfie Whittingham.

The 16-year old son of watching former Pompey boss Guy Whittingham, was arguably Swanmore's man-of-the-match.

But the goal scoring accolade went to Harry Weekes, whose bustling style unsettled Testwood throughout.

Appropriately Weekes, who caught the eye in that Fratton Park final, gave Swanmore the early advantage with a well taken goal after the Testwood defence had been opened up.

The lead didn't last long. Testwood got a free kick for a trip on the edge of the box and Worthington buried his shot out of reach of Will Gailer, Swanmore's slightly built goalkeeper.

The hosts probably enjoyed their best spell of the tie after that, but Swanmore looked more likely to score, with Callum Stanton saving from Weekes and Steve Fazackerley shooting wide.

Swanmore restored their lead early in the second half.

Whittingham, so effective in midfield, won another important challenge and fed Tom Fripp, who ushered a quick pass to

Weekes, who poked his shot through the advancing Stanton's legs.

Swanmore might well have added further goals after that.

Frapp smacked a tremendous shot against the woodwork after teeing up the

chance himself, while Stanton made another fine save to deny Ben Shafie. Weekes ought to have completed a hat-trick before the end but, through on his own with Stanton stranded, shanked his shot wide of the target.

It finished 2-1 in Swanmore's favour but it could have been more ...

It was Swanmore's fourth cup win – their route to the final having included previous victories over Sandown Bay (2-0), Neveille Lovett (2-1), John Hanson (1-0) and Mountbatten (2-0).

Robert May's, aided by an early bye, beat Bohunt 3-2, Sholing 3-2 and Upper Shirley 3-0 to reach the final.



TWO-GOAL HERO: Swanmore's Harry Weekes.

Non-league News

'Rusty' Gillespie still grabs ALL four goals

RICHARD Gillespie lived up to his 'Mr Goals' nickname for Poole Town on Tuesday.

The former Bashley and Eastleigh marksman netted all four for the Dolphins in a 4-1 defeat of Banbury United at Tatnam.

He opened his account with a slide-rule finish under the 'keeper before glancing home Ekow Elliott's centre.

Poole's prolific marksman then claimed the match ball by stroking home a 51st-minute penalty after he had been fouled and he completed his rout with a tidy touch and finish from substitute Charlie Davis's cross.

Having missed a large chunk of the season with inflammation of the sole of the foot, Gillespie, pictured, said: "A lot of aspects of my game are still very rusty, things like the timing of headers, control and a bit of sharpness, but I think there are certain things you just don't lose."



Poole still have work to do to clinch a Calor Southern Premier play-off spot and Gillespie confessed: "If we didn't get in the top five we would have to consider our season a failure."

Bash drop down – but it could be worse

THE good news for Bashley is that their future is secure and they will remain members of the Southern Football League.

The bad news is they will be dropping a level to Division One South & West.

The New Forest club's relegation was confirmed on Tuesday night when they lost 2-0 at home to a Bedford Town already doomed.

The Eagles led midway through the first half when Bash keeper Monty George's punch was headed into the net by Jamie Nicholls. Minutes later the advantage was doubled when Kerran Birch netted a diving header.

Bash, though, can look forward to next season with optimism having confirmed that funding is in place.

A statement from chairman Mike Cranidge said: "I am delighted to inform you that Bashley FC will continue to function as a member of the Southern League."

"Following the provision of an affordable budget for 2014/15, a process is now under way to fill vacant executive positions from within the club."

"Thanks to the success of our money-raising activities funding is now in place."



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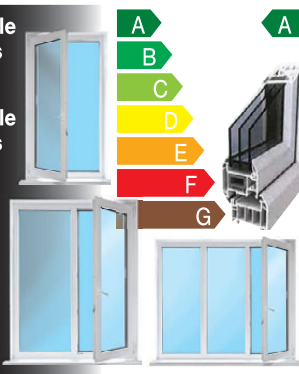


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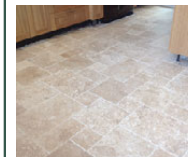
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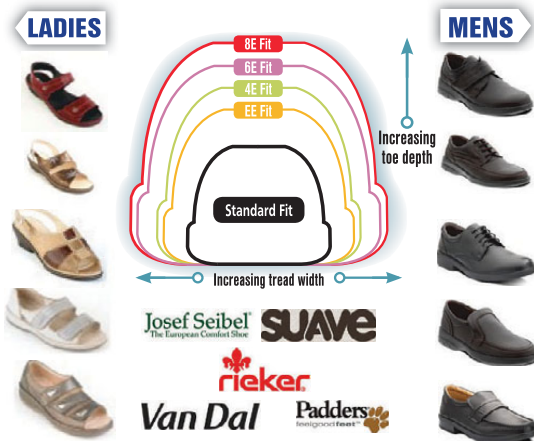
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Barclays Premier League

A. Villa.....1	Fulham.....2	Richardson 61	
Holt 70		Rodriguez 86	
HT 0-0		Att 33,532	
Cardiff.....0	Crystal P.....3	Puncheon 31,88	
		Ledley 71	
HT 0-1		Att 27,687	
Chelsea.....L	Stoke.....L		
HT L-L			
Hull.....1	Swansea.....0		
Boyd 39			
HT 1-0		Att 22,744	
Man City.....4	SAINTS.....1	Lambert 37 pen	
Toure 3 pen, Nasri 45			
Dzeko 45, Jovetic 81			
HT 3-1		Att 47,009	
Newcastle.....0	Man Utd.....4	Mata 39,50, Hernandez 65	
		Januzaj 90	
HT 0-1		Att 67,859	
Norwich.....0	W.B.A.....1	Amalfitano 16	
HT 0-1		Att 26,859	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Liverpool	32	14	1	1	48	13	8	4	4	40	26	71
Man City	31	14	0	1	52	10	8	4	4	32	19	70
Chelsea	32	14	2	0	39	9	7	4	5	23	15	69
Arsenal	32	10	5	1	29	10	9	2	5	27	27	64
Everton	31	11	3	1	29	13	6	6	4	20	18	60
Man Utd	33	7	3	6	22	19	10	3	4	34	19	57
Spurs	32	7	3	5	19	21	9	2	5	23	23	56
SAINTS	33	7	5	4	29	21	6	4	7	21	28	48
Newcastle	33	7	3	7	19	26	7	1	8	19	25	46
Stoke	32	8	6	2	22	15	2	4	10	15	30	40
West Ham	32	6	3	7	22	23	4	4	8	14	19	37
Hull	33	7	4	6	20	16	3	2	11	14	24	36
A. Villa	32	5	2	10	19	28	4	5	6	16	20	34
Crystal P	32	7	2	7	14	18	3	2	11	9	21	34
Swansea	33	5	5	6	29	23	3	4	10	16	26	33
W.B.A.	32	3	8	5	19	22	3	6	7	18	26	32
Norwich	33	6	6	5	15	13	2	2	12	11	39	32
Fulham	33	4	1	11	19	34	4	2	11	14	40	27
Cardiff	33	5	4	8	18	32	1	4	11	11	32	26
Sunderland	30	3	3	9	14	23	3	4	8	14	25	25

SkyBet Championship

Barnsley.....0	Brighton.....0	Att 10,195	
HT 0-0			
Blackburn.....2	Ipswich.....0	Att 13,281	
Rhodes 64, Gestede 80			
HT 0-0			
Blackpool.....1	Yeovil.....2	Hayter 16 pen	
Grandin 78		Lawrence 74	
HT 0-1		Att 13,310	
CHERRIES.....2	Q.P.R.....1	Traore 46	
Elphick 45			
Grabban 60		Att 11,307	
HT 1-0			
Charlton.....0	Reading.....1	Williams 73	
HT 0-0			
Doncaster.....1	Birmingham.....3	Macheda 57,76	
Quinn 36		Novak 71	
HT 1-0		Att 9,206	
Huddersfield.....0	Bolton.....1	Mason 90	
HT 0-0		Att 15,120	
Middlesbrough.....1	Derby City.....0		
Chalobah 69		Att 15,234	
HT 0-0			
Nottm For.....1	Millwall.....2	Malone 19, Martin 39	
HT 0-2		Att 20,077	
Watford.....1	Burnley.....1	Arfield 86	
Deeney 9		Att 16,182	
HT 1-0			
Wigan.....1	Leeds Utd.....0		
Waghorn 33		Att 16,443	
HT 1-0			

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Leicester	40	15	4	1	43	18	12	4	4	33	20	89
Burnley	40	13	6	1	34	13	9	8	3	31	21	80
Q.P.R.	40	13	5	2	30	14	7	5	8	19	21	70
Derby City	40	11	4	5	37	21	9	5	6	32	25	69
Wigan	40	11	7	2	32	20	8	3	9	22	19	67
Reading	40	7	8	5	33	22	10	4	6	28	24	63
Nottm For	40	9	6	5	33	24	5	10	5	24	26	58
Brighton	40	8	6	6	25	20	7	7	6	17	16	58
Ipswich	40	10	5	5	29	20	5	8	7	22	26	58
CHERRIES	40	9	6	5	31	21	7	5	8	24	35	58
Blackburn	40	9	6	5	28	18	5	8	7	26	35	56
Watford	39	9	5	6	32	20	4	9	6	29	28	53
Middlesbrough	40	8	9	3	28	16	4	7	9	22	27	52
Sheff Wed	40	8	3	8	33	24	3	9	8	16	25	48
Bolton	40	5	10	5	26	20	6	5	9	25	35	48
Leeds Utd	40	4	8	8	32	28	5	4	11	20	32	47
Huddersfield	40	8	5	7	33	27	4	5	11	17	28	46
Birmingham	40	2	8	10	26	32	9	2	9	26	28	43
Doncaster	40	9	4	7	25	25	2	6	12	11	35	43
Blackpool	40	7	6	7	19	20	3	6	11	15	36	42
Charlton	38	5	5	8	13	20	4	6	10	14	28	38
Barnsley	39	5	8	7	20	31	3	4	12	18	34	36
Millwall	40	5	7	8	23	31	3	5	12	16	39	36
Yeovil	40	4	5	11	16	25	4	6	10	23	38	35

SkyBet League One

Bradford.....2	Oldham.....3	Weeslowski 22	
Reach 36		Clarke-Harris 45,58	
Jones 90		Att 14,920	
HT 1-2			
Brentford.....3	Notts Cnty.....1	Spencer 84	
Forshaw 32 pen			
Judge 43,52		Att 8,188	
HT 2-0			
Bristol C.....1	Preston.....1	King 69	
Elliott 75		Att 12,537	
HT 0-0			
Carlisle.....1	Swindon.....0		
Madine 38			
HT 1-0		Att 4,055	
Colchester.....1	Tranmere.....2	Akpa Akpro 36	
Sears 45		Lowe 63	
HT 1-1		Att 3,443	
Coventry.....1	M K Dons.....2	Alli 39	
Baker 57		McLeod 66	
HT 0-1		Att 2,781	
Crawley.....1	Crewe.....2	Ikpeazu 18	
Proctor 69		Inman 80	
HT 0-1		Att 3,024	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Gillingham	41	15	4	2	39	11	12	5	3	35	14	90
Akinfenwa 30												
Weston 57												
Dack 84												
HT 1-1												
Port Vale.....1	Walsall.....0											
Myrie-Williams 52 pen												
HT 0-0												
Sheff Utd.....1	Leyton O.....1	Cox 41										
Murphy 63		Att 18,809										
HT 0-1												
Shrewsbury.....1	Stevenage.....0											
Taylor 57		Att 5,178										
HT 0-0												
Wolves.....2	Peterboro.....0											
Bath 48, Edwards 69		Att 23,204										
HT 0-0												

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Wolves	41	15	4	2	39	11	12	5	3	35	14	90
Brentford	40	16	1	3	40	17	9	8	3	25	19	84
Rotherham	40	9	8	3	41	28	13	4	3	36	20	78
Leyton O	41	11	3	6	35	19	11	8	2	38	19	77
Preston	41	9	9	2	30	22	11	7	3	27	17	76
Peterboro	40	11	2	6	27	20	8	2	11	34	34	61
M K Dons	41	8	4	8	26	23	9	3	9	32	32	58
Swindon	41	12	3	5	37	25	4	6	11	21	29	57
Port Vale	41	12	3	6	33	28	5	3	12	22	38	57
Walsall	41	7	6	7	20	25	7	8	6	25	17	56
Sheff Utd	40	9	7	4	27	17	5	4	11	14	26	53
Bradford	41	6	9	6	32	26	5	7	8	20	25	49
Coventry	41	9	7	5	39	36	7	4	9	32	35	49
Gillingham	40	9	4	8	32	30	5	2	12	22	37	48
Bristol C	41	6	9	6	32	27	4	8	8	31	37	47
Oldham	41	7	5	8	21	26	5	6	10	25	31	47
Crawley	38	8	5	6	19	21	3	8	8	21	27	46
Colchester	41	7	5	9	25	27	3	8	9	20	30	43
Tranmere	40	5	7	8	27	36	3	11	11	22	34	43
Carlisle	40	8	5	8	26	30	3	5	11	14	31	43
Crewe	41	6	6	8	24	31	5	4	12	25	45	43
Shrewsbury	41	6	7	8	19	21	3	7	10	18	29	41
Notts Cnty	41	9	2	9	33	26	3	2	16	22	46	40
Stevenage	41	6	5	9	23	26	4	4	13	17	35	39

SkyBet League Two

AFC Wimbledon 0	Bristol R.....0	Att 4,322	
HT 0-0			
Acc Stanley.....0	Northmptn.....1	Hackett 4	
HT 0-0		Att 1,616	
Burton Albion.....1	Plymouth.....0	McFadzean 27	
HT 1-0		Att 2,962	
Bury.....2	Exeter.....0	Hussey 65	
Soares 90		Att 2,718	
HT 0-0			
Cheltenham.....1	Southend.....2	Corr 64	
Harrison 45		Hurst 67	
HT 1-0		Att 2,949	
Chesterfield.....1	Newport County.....1	Porter 83	
Ryan 49		Att 5,659	
HT 0-0			
Morecambe.....0	Mansfield.....1	Daniel 42	
HT 0-1		Att 1,772	
Oxford Utd.....0	Fleetwood Town.....2	Ball 34	
HT 0-0		Sarcevic 52	
HT 0-1		Att 5,679	
POMPEY.....1	Hartlepool.....0	Webster 2	
HT 1-0		Att 15,273	
Rochdale.....0	York.....0	Att 3,830	
HT 0-0			
Torquay.....0	Scunthorpe.....1	Winnall 31 pen	
HT 0-1		Att 2,234	
Wycombe.....2	Dagenham.....0	Craig 47 pen	
Kretzschmar 58		Att 3,103	
HT 0-0			



GOAL: Rickie Lambert celebrates after netting from the spot in Saints' 4-1 defeat at Manchester City.

	HOME						AWAY						
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Rochdale	41	14	3	4	40	19	8	6	6	24	20	75	
Souththorpe	41	9	9	2	27	15	10	9	2	35	22	75	
Chesterfield	41	11	8	2	33	14	8	6	6	30	23	71	
Fleetwood T	41	10	4	6	37	27	10	4	7	22	19	68	
Burton Alb	41	10	6	5	24	20	8	8	4	19	17	68	
Southend	41	9	7	4	27	15	7	7	7	23	22	62	
York	41	8	8	4	20	14	7	7	7	26	24	60	
Oxford Utd	41	8	6	7	23	20	7	8	5	26	23	59	
Plymouth	40	8	6	6	21	21	5	4	9	23	24	55	
Dagenham	41	8	7	5	24	17	5	8	8	24	32	54	
Bury	41	7	11	3	25	19	5	6	9	24	25	53	
Mansfield	41	6	6	8	23	27	7	8	6	20	25	53	
Cheltenham	41	5	9	7	26	30	7	6	7	21	25	51	
Newport	40	8	5	6	31	23	4	9	8	17	29	50	
Hartlepool	41	9	3	8	27	22	4	7	10	19	25	49	
Acc Stanley	41	5	9	7	29	26	4	9	6	18	24	49	
Wimbledon	41	8	6	7	25	24	4	7	9	17	24	49	
Morecambe	41	7	8	6	29	25	5	11	6	16	34	48	
POMPEY	41	8	5	8	20	30	10	7	21	36	48		
Exeter	41	5	5	10	18	24	7	6	8	29	29	47	
Bristol R	41	10	6	4	26	16	1	8	12	11	29	47	
Wycombe	41	6	5	10	18	24	5	8	7	23	24	46	
Northampton	41	5	7	8	20	30	5	6	10	14	23	46	
Torquay	41	4	8	9	18	27	5	10	14	17	32	36	